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Slain victims' bags missing

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The shoulder bags of the two women who were shot dead inside a restaurant in San Antonio could not be found and the police confirmed yesterday that the bags were missing at the crime scene.

» Victims' family members arrive

As this developed, family members of the victims arrived on Saipan over the weekend.

See **SLAIN** on **Page 4**



Linxiang Cui, older sister of slain baker Linhua Cui, seeks assistance from the Chinese Association of Saipan as her younger brother, Hulin Cui, looks on. Nancy Zhang, a member of the Chinese Association, assisted the two in filling up the application form yesterday afternoon. Linxiang and Hulin Cui, who arrived on Saipan over the weekend, are appealing for justice and the arrest of the killer/s.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Contractor objects to IPI's concern about ghost workers

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A former contractor of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC and its owner are objecting to IPI's sub-

poena that seeks records from the contractor suggesting unfounded allegations about "ghost workers."

Colin M. Thompson informed IPI general counsel Phillip J. Tydingco Tuesday last week that his clients—Pacific Rim Land Development LLC and its owner, Keith Stewart—object that



Thompson

IPI's subpoena does not give his clients reasonable time to collect and produce the large amounts of documents that IPI is requesting by that day, Tuesday.

See **IPI** on **Page 4**

WINNING FLOAT

Koblerville Elementary School's float, which is patterned after a native hut, waits for the start of the Christmas in the Marianas' Parade of Lights last Saturday at the Garapan Fishing Base. Koblerville won the float competition.

ROSELYN B. MONROY

17 priorities identified for \$243M

By **MARK RABAGO**
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Northern Marianas Housing Corp. has come up

with 17 priority projects that could be funded by the over \$243 million the CNMI received in Community Development Block Grant-Disaster

Recovery funds from U.S. Housing and Urban Development.

Topping the CBDG-DR

See **\$243M** on **Page 4**



INSIDE



LOCAL

Skymark's "Saipan Passport" tells tourists what to do, see, and where to go on Saipan.

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BUSINESS

InteliSecure, a provider of critical data security services, plans to open in the CNMI.

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ASIA

A strong earthquake in the southern Philippines has killed three people.

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Tourism Topics


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Hafa Adai & Tirow Way



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TEAM PDI



17th Annual Christmas in The Marianas

17th Annual Christmas in The Marianas

COTA SHUTTLE SERVICES SCHEDULE

American Memorial Park (AMP) to Paseo De Marianas (PDM)
Every 15 minutes from 5:00 PM to 9:30 PM

Paseo De Marianas (PDM) to American Memorial Park (AMP)
Every 15 minutes from 5:10 PM to 9:40 PM


PROGRAM LINE-UP FOR DECEMBER 21, 2019*

SKYMARK NIGHT

6:00-6:15PM : Opening Performance by Performers from Japan
6:25-6:45PM : Man Antigo / Domatsuri Warriors
6:45PM : First Raffle Drawing
6:55-7:25PM : Performers from Japan
7:25-7:45PM : Philippine Cultural & Contemporary / SMADS
7:45-8:00PM : Second Raffle Drawing
8:00-8:15PM : MVA Skymark Model Awards
8:15pm -8:40 : DPS Blues
8:40-9:05PM : Studio 29:11
9:05-10:00PM : Closing Performance by Performer from Japan and Final Raffle

**Program Line up is Subject to Change*




SPECIAL THANKS TO

Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) • Department of Public Lands (DPL)
Department of Public Safety (DPS) • Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS)
• Lollipop • Hard Rock Cafe Saipan • Furusato • Century Tours • Century Tours/iShop



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A bi-weekly update from the Marianas Visitors Authority

Local

30-day time-served sentence for a man in child abuse case

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Retired Army reservist Michael Barry Murphy, who was originally charged with sexual abuse of a 4-year-old girl in 2016, pleaded guilty Friday to the offense of child abuse and was slapped with a 30-day time-served sentence.

Murphy, 57, signed a plea deal with the CNMI government. Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan accepted the plea agreement and its terms.

Bogdan sentenced Murphy to 30 days in prison, with credit for the 30 days he has already served; this means he is already out of prison.

Murphy was ordered to pay a \$1,000 fine and ordered to leave the CNMI within 30 days. He is not allowed to come back sooner than two years from departure.

The judge also prohibited Murphy from having contact with the victim or her mother.

A family member of the victim told *Saipan Tribune* that the Office of the Attorney General did not give the family an opportunity to be involved in the process of reaching the plea agreement. She accused the OAG of being in a hurry to hammer out the plea deal.

She said Bogdan, who is the third judge assigned to this case, seemed shocked when a family member stood up after the sentencing and expressed disappointment as to why they were not consulted about the plea deal.

In a statement, the family member said the original charges were sexual abuse/assault with a minor in first degree and second degree, and assault and battery, yet he case ended up only as child abuse.

"They call it a fair trial?

Justice? What's fair about a serial child rapist walking free? Where is the justice in this?" she said.

The family member said their worst nightmares have come true and that Murphy has manipulated the courts, the Commonwealth, the victims' families, and them—the survivors.

She also accused the OAG of having a history and a pattern of neglect that has not brought justice to sexual assault victims and victims of any crime.

"Is this selective prosecution? Inadequate representation and poor investigation," she said.

The family member said that Murphy has yet again gotten away with what he has done.

"This is why a lot of victims are afraid to come forward from this crime in our cul-

ture and the CNMI Judiciary system. We need do to better for sexual victims and other victims of such heinous acts," she said.

She alleged that Murphy has been involved in sexual assault/abuse involving minors in the first and second degree, and that several victims have come forward.

The government originally charged the defendant with sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree and sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree, for allegedly sexually abusing a 4-year-old girl on Aug. 6, 2016.

Assistant attorney general Samantha Vickery served as counsel for the government. Previous prosecutors handled the case.

Assistant public defender Heather Zona, counsel for Murphy, filed numerous motions in this case.

The incident allegedly happened from 1994 to 2004 when the victim was a minor. The alleged victim in the second case is now an adult, according to court documents.



IN APPRECIATION

Members of the House of Representatives award a plaque of recognition to former Superior Court associate judge Timothy H. Bellas, center, front row, at the House chamber last Friday, in honor of his 38 years of distinguished service to the people of the CNMI.

IVA MAURIN

SVES, Agape win caroling competition

By **JUSTINE NAUTA**
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REPORTER

San Vicente Elementary School, Agape Middle School, and Agape High School were named winners in a recent caroling competition at the Paseo de Marianas in Garapan as part of the annual Christmas in the Marianas celebration.

The caroling competition was composed of different divisions for elementary schools, middle schools, and

high schools. In all, there were nine elementary schools, four middle schools, and four high schools that competed.

San Vicente Elementary School won first place in the elementary school division. Coming in second was Kolblerville Elementary School. Agape Elementary was able to place third, followed by Green Meadow Elementary School in fourth place. Oleai Elementary School was awarded fifth place, Saipan International

Elementary won sixth place. Grace Christian Academy came in seventh place, Mt. Carmel Elementary School placed eighth and in ninth place was Kagman Elementary School.

Agape Middle School took home first place in the middle school division, along with Hopwood Jr. Middle School in second place, in third place was Green Meadow Middle School, and in fourth place was Chacha Middle School.

Agape High School placed first in the high school division, Saipan Southern High School came in second place, in third place was Grace Christian Academy and in fourth place was Marianas High School.

The elementary school division contest was held last Nov. 30, 2019, while the middle and high school contest was held on Dec. 7, 2019. The winners were announced last Dec. 14, 2019. There was no immediate information on the prizes they won in the competition.

Satellite launched to provide broadband in Asia-Pacific

By JUSTINE C. NAUTA
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REPORTER

A private company will be launching a satellite into low-

earth orbit to provide low-cost internet over a wide area of Asia and the Pacific, including the CNMI and Guam.

The satellite, owned by

Kacific Broadband Satellites Group, which is based in Singapore, will be working with SpaceX to launch the satellite from a launchpad in Florida, with two possible windows: either yesterday at 3:32pm (Saipan time) or today at 3:32pm (Saipan time).

The satellite, called Kacific1, will be Kacific Broadband Satellites Group's first one in

space. The company describes the satellite in a press release as a high-quality, low-cost broadband that is intended to provide high-quality, low-cost satellite broadband that is accessible from a small, easy-to-install and affordable antenna.

Kacific1 is designed and built by Boeing and will launch into geostationary orbit atop a SpaceX Falcon9 launch

vehicle. Kacific1 will cover more than 600 million people across 25 nations in the Pacific and Southeast Asia.

Covered nations include American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Micronesia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia,

Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, and Timor-Leste.

Once the satellite is in its orbital position above the Asia Pacific, Kacific1 will provide previous unserved or underserved populations in the Pacific and Southeast Asia with affordable, high-speed broadband for healthcare, education, government services, business and disaster relief.

Kacific Broadband Satellites Group was founded by CEO Christion Patouraux in 2013, and is headquartered in Singapore.

Kacific sells internet access via wholesale channels to government agencies, institutions, businesses, community groups, and households.

Kacific aims to provide broadband quality at a lower price than current retail price.

Registration for Filipino overseas voting begins

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

The registration for Filipino overseas absentee voting for the May 2022 general elections officially began yesterday, Dec. 16.

To register, Filipinos in the CNMI simply have to go to the consular outreach mission of the Philippine Consulate General on Saipan, bring their passport, and then register to vote, according to Philippine consul to Guam Mark Francis C. Hamoy.

Those who have already registered and want to verify if they are still on the active voter rolls, or have been deactivated, could also go to the consular mission to check.

The Philippine Commission on Election updates the list of voters after every election to purge the names of people who have registered but have failed to vote in two consecutive elections.

"Filipinos need to re-register when they had failed to vote for two consecutive elec-

tion cycles," Hamoy said. "If they did not vote this year, and they did not vote in 2016, that means they have failed to vote in two election cycles. It is highly probable then that they have been removed from the system."

In addition, Filipino voters who moved to the CNMI from another country should request for a transfer of their voting location.

"For example, if they used to work in Saudi Arabia and now, they are in CNMI, they have to request for a transfer of voting location. They have to show up [at a consular mission] and present the needed documents."

The next consular mission in Saipan is tentatively set in January.

For more information on overseas voting, consular mission schedules, or other consular services, check <http://www.philippinesguam.org/> or visit the Philippine Honorary Consulate on Saipan at the second floor of the JP Centre on Beach Road in Garapan.

Supreme Court affirms woman's conviction

The NMI Supreme Court affirmed Thursday last week a woman's conviction for three counts of assault and battery and three counts of disturbing the peace.

In an opinion in *Commonwealth v. Tian* that it issued on Dec. 12, 2019, the Supreme Court affirmed Shu Jie Tian's conviction from a bench trial for three counts of assault and battery under 6 CMC § 1201(a) and three counts of disturbing the peace under 6 CMC § 3101(a).

Babul Miah, Bulbul Miah, and MD Rana Shiek had gone to a construction compound to collect unpaid wages from their former employer. Using a cellphone, the nephew began video recording around the barracks and took some footage of Tian who was inside a kitchen. When the nephew did

not delete the footage of her, she chased after the nephew, pulling his arm to grab the cellphone. What followed was a scuffle between Tian and the family, in which Tian pulled at their arms to retrieve the cellphone. The scuffle finally ended when Tian fell to the ground.

The Supreme Court reviewed two issues: (1) whether sufficient evidence supported the conviction, and (2) whether, in the alternative, the conviction was against the manifest weight of the evidence.

First, the high court held Tian need not move for a judgment of acquittal under Rule 29 of the NMI Criminal Rules of Procedure in a bench trial to preserve a sufficiency of the evidence claim for de novo review. The high court reasoned that a plea of not guilty is the functional equivalent of a

judgment of acquittal motion.

Because Tian's conviction involved general intent crimes, the high court then examined the facts to determine whether she intended her actions. Because Tian admitted to making physical contact with the nephew, father, and son, the high court determined a rational factfinder could find the elements of assault and battery and Disturbing the Peace were met. The court found Tian intended to act and therefore there was sufficient evidence to support her conviction. Finally, the Supreme Court rejected Tian's request to adopt a manifest weight of the evidence standard, because appellate courts do not reweigh evidence and examine the credibility of witnesses.

The high court's full opinion is available at <http://cnmilaw.org/pdf/supreme/2019-MP-09.pdf>. (PR)

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Homeless Prevention Coalition elects new board

The CNMI Homeless Prevention Coalition elected a new board during a meeting last September, as the non-profit prepares for its 2020 Point-In-Time survey on Jan. 25, 2020.

Elected to the chairmanship is Christy Sakaziro of the Empty Vessel Ministry. She replaced Vivian T. Sablan of the Division of Youth Services.

Her vice chair is Chris Heeb of the Micronesian Legal Services Corp. and he succeeded Wayne Gillespie of the CNMI Salvation Army. The Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence's Maisie Tenorio is the new treasurer replacing Sheelane

Borja from DYS. Gennie Bliss will continue her work as secretary of the coalition.

The 2020 Point-In-Time survey on Jan. 25 will be from 7am to 4pm and the coalition, according to Bliss, is looking for between 100 to 150 volunteers.

During its latest Point-In-Time survey, 500 households successfully took part in the census, with 290 deemed to be homeless households and 151 living in substandard homes.

Total number of homeless people in the CNMI was 1,018, while people living in substandard homes totaled 769.

and Economic Revitalization Ranking are improvements for the Tinian Mayor's Office west side connecting streets (\$3.3 million); Department of Community and Cultural Affairs' Kagman Shelter (\$805,200); DPW's flood mitigation of Chili St. (\$715,000); Community Guidance Center's Treatment and Recovery Office (\$650,000); Rota Mayor's Office sports facility in Songsong Village (\$198,000); Public School System's San Vicente Elementary School (\$911,900); CHCC's Transitional Living Center (\$66,000); Micronesian Legal Services Corp.'s client office (\$5,500); Department of Land and Natural Resources' replacement and revetment of the Smiling Cove Marina (\$4.4 million); and DLNR's Outer Cove Marina floating dock (\$1.1 million).

The cost of all 17 priority projects is \$76.4 million and includes 10% contingency cost of the project.

NMHC corporate director Jesse Palacios said the criteria in selecting the government projects were based on the evaluation factors below:

1. Restoration of infrastructure damaged by Super Typhoon Yutu and Typhoon Mangkhut in order of priority;

- Support the restoration/improvement of utilities, water, and sewer facilities;

- Support the restoration/improvement of critical facilities such as the schools, ports, hospital, and that improve services to the general public;

- Support the restoration/improvement of roads and drainage system;

- Support the leverage of funding with other disaster assistance (such as FEMA and UCAE) to ensure resiliency in infrastructure;

- Support the restoration of other public facilities such as community centers, gymnasiums, etc.

2. Economic revitalization which includes any CDBG-DR eligible activity that restores and improves some aspect of the local economy. The economic revitalization activity may address job losses, or negative impacts to tax revenues or businesses.

3. Support the improvement/enhancement of the CNMI's facilities that promote tourism.

NMHC also has two others lists for CDBG-DR funding—Main Project Ranking (Economic Revitalization) and Alternate Project Ranking—and will be published by the *Saipan Tribune* in the coming days.

Broken down, there were 227 homeless household on Saipan, 58 on Tinian, and five on Rota.

CONTRACTOR

From Page 1

day, at 1:30pm.

In his letter to Tydingco dated Tuesday, Thompson said IPI served the subpoena on Stewart last Monday at 3pm.

Thompson said Tydingco is the attorney and IPI is the party responsible for issuing and serving the subpoena.

Tydingco's last day as IPI's general counsel was last Friday. Tydingco, however, informed the U.S. District Court for the NMI last Tuesday, that he is no longer counsel for IPI in the case filed by Pacific Rim and several others against IPI.

Thompson said Tydingco did not take reasonable steps to avoid imposing undue burden or expense on his clients.

Thompson said the timing and scope of the subpoena are unreasonable and create an undue burden.

"Under the terms of the promissory note and construction contract, your demand for documents is completely irrelevant and therefore your subpoena is unreasonable," Thompson told Tydingco in the letter.

Among the documents that Tydingco requested in the subpoena are records detailing the qualifications of Pacific Rim's workers.

Tydingco said there is a concern that not all Pacific Rim workers satisfied the contractual qualification

For more information or interested in volunteering for the upcoming Point-In-Time survey,

standard for the work category and that there may have also been "ghost workers."

Tydingco said this will necessitate IPI reviewing and analyzing the records detailing the qualifications of Pacific Rim's workers.

Tydingco also requested for time records and actual payments made to all workers to ensure Pacific Rim's invoices were based on the actual wages paid to the workers.

In Pacific Rim's and Stewart's objection, Thompson said IPI is now concerned that there may have been "ghost workers" included in Pacific Rim's invoicing.

Thompson said this concern is unfounded as IPI conducted multiple headcounts on the job site during the construction activities.

"IPI's own audits would reveal any discrepancies between on-site workers and invoiced labor," Thompson said.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona ordered Monday the consolidation of Pacific Rim's lawsuit and an application for a mechanic's lien filed against IPI.

Last Sept. 20, Pacific Rim Land Development, through counsel Colin M. Thompson, filed the lawsuit against IPI for breach of contract.

Pacific Rim subsequently filed an application for a mechanic's lien on IPI's hotel-casino project and on the land that it sits on.

contact Bliss at (670) 237-1000 or Jacob Muña at (670) 234-6866/9447. *(Mark Rabago)*

A mechanic's lien refers to a security interest in the title to property for the benefit of those who have supplied labor or materials that improve the property.

Last Dec. 3, finding that Pacific Rim had not established jurisdiction, Manglona dismissed the lawsuit, but allowed the contractor to amend its complaint.

Manglona also denied Pacific Rim's application for a mechanic's lien, but allowed the contractor to amend it.

Last Dec. 4, Pacific Rim filed its amended complaint and an amended application for a mechanic's lien. That same day, the company filed an application for a mechanic's lien against IPI in a new proceeding.

In her order consolidating the two cases, Manglona said that, while not identical, the applications for the lien involve the same construction project, the same property, and the same parties.

Pacific Rim originally sued IPI and five unnamed alleged co-conspirators for breach of contract (construction and promissory note), and unjust enrichment.

Pacific Rim claimed to have substantially completed or completed the agreed-upon construction work for IPI's casino-resort project on Sept. 30, 2018.

Pacific Rim counsel Thompson said IPI owes the contractor \$5.65 million.

SLAIN

From Page 1

Department of Public Safety spokesman Adrian Pangelinan said yesterday that it was Dr. Jeremy Devvey of the Commonwealth Health Center who pronounced dead the first victim, identified as 43-year-old Ria Na Lim, at 9:47am, and the second victim, identified as 53-year-old Lim Hua Choi, at 9:54am.

Saipan Tribune sources, however, identified the victims as Li Na Lim, a Korean, and Linhua Cui, a Chinese-Korean.

Lim used to be a tour guide and later owned the Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant, where she and Cui were shot. Cui was a former garment factory worker and subsequently became a baker at Paris Croissant. Cui was helping Lim in the restaurant.

Lim's friends confirmed with *Saipan Tribune* that the correct name is Li Na Lim and not Ria Na Lim. Cui's brother and sisters also confirmed with *Saipan Tribune* that the other victim's name is Linhua Cui and not Lim Hua Choi.

When asked about the inconsistency, Pangelinan said he will verify the names with police detectives.

In a press statement yesterday, Pangelinan said individuals close to the victims told police that both victims always carried with them shoulder bags. Pangelinan said police failed to locate the shoulder bags at the scene. The press statement did not state any significance for the missing bags.

One shoulder bag is described as white in color with a floral design, from an unknown brand. The second bag is described as black in color, from an unknown brand.

Pangelinan said police are also reviewing surveillance footage from neighboring establishments and buildings.

He said police will share more details about the footage with the public, if it will help with the investigation into this case.

Pangelinan asked the public to be on the lookout for the two shoulder bags.

"If you or anyone notices the described bags in an unusual area or place, please do not hesitate, no matter how insignificant it may seem and call 911, or the Criminal Investigation Bureau at 664-9042," he said, adding that anyone who wishes to remain anonymous may call the CNMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-727.

Pangelinan said preliminary investigation revealed that both victims were shot.

He said more details will follow after an autopsy has been performed.

The DPS spokesman said DPS is working with the Office of the Attorney General for an autopsy to be performed by a medical examiner.

DPS said that it received a call last Friday at 7:35am about two unresponsive individuals at a Korean restaurant in San Antonio.

Responding police officers confirmed the report. DPS crime scene technicians secured the area.

Both victims were then transported to the Commonwealth Health Center.

Saipan Tribune learned that Linhua Cui's older sister, Linxiang Cui, arrived on Saipan from South Korea last Saturday. Their younger brother, Hulin Cui, came to the island from China the following day.

Linxiang Cui and Hulin Cui, with the assistance of victim Cui's friend, went to the Chinese Association of Saipan yesterday to seek help.

Nancy Zhang of the Chinese Association said that they have already contacted the Chinese consulate in Los Angeles about the incident.

Zhang said the consulate will communicate with the CNMI government for whatever it can do to help the investigation and the family.

Saipan Tribune also learned that victim Lim's parents, sister, and another family member arrived on Saipan last Saturday.

A property manager of an apartment in Gualo Rai said that Lim just moved into their apartment in 2016. The property manager described Lim as a nice lady who is always busy.

Expo Tour tour coordinator Young Ae Kim said that Lim was like a sister to her. She said Lim worked for their company for a year as a tour guide. Lim left their company two and a half years ago to work for another tour agent.

She said Lim then put up a new company that owns the Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant.

Ae said she the last time she saw her friend was two weeks ago when she bought rice cakes at her restaurant.

Ae said that Lim's restaurant has many Korean customers.

\$243M

From Page 1

Infrastructure and Economic Revitalization Ranking Results are two projects for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. worth \$3.9 million and \$4.51 million, respectively.

Water System Mitigation Project No. 2 leads the rankings and calls for the procurement and installation of 10 back-up generators in strategic sites to provide emergency back-up power to 33 water wells in Kagman, Gualo Rai, Calhoun, Rapagao, Koblerville, and As Matuis/Marpi.

Second on the list is the Kagman Water Tank and involves replacing the existing 1-million-gallon water tank with a new pre-stressed concrete water tank. It will serve water to the Kagman areas with the ability to move excess water to Papago, San Vicente, and Dandan tank service areas.

No. 3 are badly needed classrooms for the Northern Marianas College, and aside from the \$27.5 million that represents 10% matching for Federal Emergency Management Agency projects, this project has the largest price tag on the list at \$16.1 million. It covers reconstruction of classrooms and laboratories destroyed by Super Typhoon Yutu in late October 2018.

NMHC also prioritized relocation and acquisition of a new home for the Northern Marianas Technical Institute. It comes at a cost of \$6.05 million and would include the acquisition of the Koblerville property, where the gymnasium is currently located, and where NMTI will move its new campus.

Some \$5.5 million in CBDG-DR monies will also be allocated to priority No. 6, which is the Department of Public Works and its Beach Road improvement project. It will involve the stretch of road from the American Memorial Park to the Pacific Islands Club Saipan. NMHC said that "rutting, potholes, and unevenness due to settling has made the road dangerous to motorists." The project would include placement of a base course to be graded and compacted, pavement resurfacing, and inclusion of road markings.

The seventh priority project is replacing the CNMI Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management's communications tower; it comes with a cost of \$550,000.

The rest of the 17 priority projects under the CBDG-DR Infrastructure

'Sky Spot' rewards await Skymark passengers

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

A shiny sticker on the check-out counter at the Joeten grocery store in Susupe proclaims the site as a "Sky Spot." That means any holder of a "Saipan Passport" that Skymark Airlines Inc. is giving its passengers can avail of any discount or promo that the store may be offering.

This promotional effort is part of Skymark Airlines Inc.'s bid to promote the islands by giving each and every Skymark passenger a "Saipan Passport" that contains a list of what to do, see, and where to go while on Saipan.

The "Saipan Passport" also contains information about discounts and promos the holder can avail of in accredited establishments. Just show the passport at any "Sky Spot" and the holder can avail of discounts or promos.

Various restaurants are listed such as Salty's Grill & Café, The Shack, Marianas Creations, Kinpanchi, Paris Croissant, The Airstream, Tasty Burger, Oleai Beach Bar & Grill, to name a few. Retail store iShop and the Pacific History Park Museum are also included.

These establishments have "Sky Spot" stickers on their doors or windows so that tourists can easily see them. At the end of every visit, the passport holder gets a stamp from the restaurant or shop on their passport that serves as a good souvenir.

According to Salty's Grill & Café manager Taka Tanzawa, they welcome this promotion and is a convenient way for Japanese tourists to maneuver their way around Saipan. "This helps Japanese tourists be aware of the restaurants on island and that's

why we always hope for full flights from Japan because this will be good for the community and tourism," he said.

"We are one of the few wholly Japanese-owned bars still operating on Saipan. ... My staff are mostly locals, so customers, especially the Japanese market, really enjoy the vibe, energy, and customer service..." he added.

Glenn Hunter, owner of The Shack and Airstream, said that, as a "Sky Spot" member, the restaurant gets to welcome Japanese tourists "island style."

"The passport encourages visitors who fly on Skymark to frequent different establishments and, in our case, we show appreciation by giving them a welcome drink," he said.

"We try to do as many cross promotions on islands and we thank Skymark and the Marianas Visitors Authority for including us in this promotion. ... We have received tourists that have flown to Saipan via Skymark and it is great to have the Japanese market back," he added.

Skymark Airlines launched its regular service of flights from Narita to Saipan only last month. This opened another door for the world to have more options to reach Saipan by flying direct from Narita to Saipan and it gave the island a chance to once again welcome the Japanese market whose absence in the tourism pool has been largely missed.

Former MVA managing director Chris Concepcion, who was instrumental in bringing Skymark to the CNMI, said that the partnership with Skymark and the CNMI is here for the long term.

"...It took many months of back and forth discussion about why the CNMI was

a good and profitable option for Skymark and why Saipan should be their first ever international destination. Skymark's leadership team is made up of very accomplished, clever individuals, so they weighed their risks and opportunities and eventually decided Saipan is the best place to begin their international expansion," Concepcion said.

"The Japan market is one of the most coveted source markets in the world because the Japanese are sophisticated travelers. They have been

around the world, are used to seeing foreign cultures, are respectful, well-mannered, and are good spenders. ... Due to the rich history and strong relationship, the 'Saipan' brand has strong name recognition in Japan up to this day," he added.

The Skymark Saipan Passport is available to all Skymark passengers. This helps them maneuver their way around Saipan: Where to go, what to do and where to avail of freebies and promos.

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NMC to host free info session

Due to the large number of participants who attended its last information session, the Northern Marianas College will be hosting another info session for the upcoming spring 2020 semester on Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019, at the NMC Olympio T. Borja Memorial Library at the college's As Terlaje campus from 5:30pm to 6:30pm.

The free session, which is open to all prospective students and community members, will provide information about NMC's admissions process, finding money for college, the college's Senior Reserve Officer Training Corps program, and NMC's various degree programs. It's also not too late to apply for financial aid for the spring

2020 semester.

Those who attend will also qualify to receive a waiver of NMC's admission application fee and placement test fees. The waiver represents a savings of up to \$75.

College faculty, staff, and students from the different degree and certificate programs at NMC, as well as Student Services representatives from counseling, financial aid, and admissions offices will also be on hand to provide helpful information and answer questions. For more information about the information session and/or applying to NMC, contact the Office of Admissions & Records at (670) 237-6770, email oar@marianas.edu or visit www.marianas.edu. (PR)

Propst: Garapan needs a facelift

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (Ind-Saipan) called on his colleagues in last Tuesday's House of Representatives session on Capital Hill to work together and help Precinct 3 representatives clean up Garapan.

Garapan serves as the primary tourism area in the CNMI, where majority of hotels, restaurants, and shopping centers do business, providing for the island's economy.

Propst raised three issues:

parking, trash, and the casino. "Parking is impossible. The small businesses complain that they are losing out on customers because they could not find parking, and it is true," he said.

While emphasizing that adequate parking is necessary, Propst also cited the Parking Act of 2015 that gave birth to parking meters that are intended to and could have generated income for the CNMI,

but instead, do not work, and need to be replaced.

The legislator also talked about the trash problem in Garapan. "We see all the trash, overgrown *tangan-tangan*, and things are dilapidated and falling apart all over. ...Garapan needs a facelift, needs a bulldozer. ...How can we allow trash on the main road, Paseo [de Marianas], to just sit there and exist?" he added.

Throughout 2019, with help

from volunteers from the PDM Promoters, Kinpachi Restaurant, and the Saipan Awaodori Team, an average of almost 500 lbs of trash a month has been collected in the area.

Stressing that tourism is everyone's business, and that the CNMI government spends millions to bring tourists to the island, Propst appealed to his colleagues, saying they need to care and collectively do better so there would be a better offering for tourists when they come to Saipan.

Propst also talked about the

possibility of the Imperial Pacific Resort and Casino becoming an eyesore if it remains on its construction phase.

"The biggest eyesore that may happen is if that casino is never finished. This is right in the tourist mecca," Propst said. "We risk not finishing that because someone, a former legislator, took out the completion bond that was in there and removed it. For what his reason was, I don't know. But it was removed, and now, if that is not going to finish, how is that going to make our islands look?"

In an interview with *Saipan Tribune* last month, IPI vice president for construction Eric Poon said that construction of Phase 1 of the resort hotel is expected to be completed on Dec. 31 this year.

Phase 2, the construction of the tower hotel's level 3 and level 13, is set to be completed on June 30; Phase 3 of level 2 VIP gaming and level 14 sky level is expected to be completed on Sept. 30; and Phase 4 of the Beach Club to be completed on Dec. 31, all next year, in 2020. (*Iva Maurin*)

High court reverses denial of new trial

The NMI Supreme Court has reversed a Superior Court order that denied Atkins Kroll (Saipan) Inc.'s bid for a new trial in a small claims case.

In its opinion in *Atkins Kroll (Saipan), Inc. v. Primo Ferrera Jr.* that was issued Friday, Dec. 13, 2019, the high court ruled that Atkins Kroll is entitled to a new trial based on precedent and according to the NMI Rule of Civil Procedure.

Primo Ferrera Jr. entered into an agreement with Atkins Kroll to purchase a motor vehicle and failed to pay monthly installments. Atkins Kroll repossessed and resold the vehicle and sued Ferrera

in small claims court for a deficiency judgment. The small claims judge ruled for Ferrera, finding Atkins Kroll failed to meet a notice requirement under CMC § 9504(3). Atkins Kroll appealed to the Superior Court, asserting it was entitled to a new trial. The Superior Court denied the appeal and affirmed the small claims court's findings.

On appeal, Atkins Kroll claimed the court abused its discretion in denying a new trial.

The Supreme Court found that Atkins Kroll was entitled to a new trial under *Chen's Corp. v. Hambros* and NMI Rule of Civil Procedure 83(j).

Parties may request a new trial in the Superior Court on appeal from an adverse judgment in small claims, and amendments to the language of the Rules of Civil Procedure have not changed the substance of this process. Though granting a new trial is discretionary rather than as of right, here the court abused its discretion in denying a new trial since it prejudiced Atkins Kroll by denying it the opportunity to present additional evidence to show that it met the notice requirement.

The high court's full opinion is available at <http://cnmi-law.org/pdf/supreme/2019-MP-10.pdf>. (*PR*)

Guam has new prevailing wage rates for construction workers

HAGÂTÑA, Guam—Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero announced yesterday that the new H-2B prevailing wage rates for common construction occupations were recently approved by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services through a biennial process using Guam data gathered from the U.S. Department of Labor OES Survey. These rates will not change again until December 2021.

The new rates only affect new applications filed with the Guam Department of Labor on or after Dec. 13, 2019. Rates for current approvals remain at the old rates until the valid labor certification expires.

"We continue to face a labor shortage even as the demand for construction projects continues to rise. I am pleased that the prevailing wage rates were approved for common construction jobs," said the governor. "We have placed more than 1,000 people in skilled apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs since the start of this administration because we know that skilled labor is a passport to economic success for Guam's working families."

The three most common H-2B occupations for which H-2B workers are imported saw modest increases in the wage rates. Carpenters and Reinforc-

ing Metalworkers saw about a 6% increase and Cement Mason rates were increased by about 4.5%. Under the new rates, Welders, Electricians, HVAC Mechanics and Construction Equipment Mechanics all command wages in excess of \$18 per hour when working alongside H-2B guest workers.

Similarly, U.S. workers employed in the same companies and occupations as H-2B workers will see pay increases as new or extended workers get certified under the new rates later next year.

The new rates are published on GDOL's website at dol.guam.gov. (*PR*)

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB20-SAR-018**

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: DECEMBER 31, 2019 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

**"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) MID-SIZE SPORTS UTILITY VEHICLE
FOR THE OFFICE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE & REHABILITATION"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ YVETTE R. SABLAN
SPECIAL ASSISTANT, SAR

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
ADDENDUM**

RFP19-CHCC/OUTPATIENT PHARMACY-022A

NEW SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JANUARY 15, 2020 TIME: 10:00 AM

**"PHARMACEUTICALS
& MEDICAL SUPPLIES SHIPPING"**

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)/INVITATION TO BID (ITB) FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE (WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP). ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **RFP's** TAB ON THE BOTTOM NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP/ITB. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
ADDENDUM**

RFP20-CHCC/HEMODIALYSIS-A

NEW SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 30, 2019 TIME: 10:00 AM

**"TWO BIOLAB 4400M DIGITAL REVERSE OSMOSIS
SYSTEM FOR MAR COR PURIFICATION"**

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THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD**

P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: cnmi@cnmibpl-hcplb.net | Website: cnmibpl-hcplb.net

Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on **Thursday, December 19, 2019 at 8am** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the CHCC Conference Room #2, Lower Navy Hill.

AGENDA

- I. Meeting Call to Order
- II. Determination of Quorum
- III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (11/18/19)
- V. Public Comments
- VI. Chairperson's Report
- VII. Director's Report
 - A. BPL/HCPLB 2019 Citizen Centric Report (PL 20-83)
 - B. Hearing Officer's Amended Legal Service Agreement
- VIII. Investigator's Report
- IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
 - A. Governor's Office
 - B. Legislature
- X. Old Business
- XI. New Business
- XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
 - A. New Applications
 - B. Renewal Applications
- XIII. Miscellaneous Business
- XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
- XV. Announcements
 - A. Next Meeting Date
 - B. Adjournment of Meeting

/s/ Theodore R. Parker, R.Ph., MPH
Chairman

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW20-ITB-002**

SUBMISSION DATE: January 17, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"Supply and Delivery of a Tire Shredder for
the Department of Public Works, Saipan"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

A non-refundable payment of **Fifty Dollars (\$50.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **January 3, 2020**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **January 14, 2020** to **Ms. Lorraine M. Seman, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST OF PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP20-BECQ/DCRM-025**

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 17, 2020 TIME: 10:30 A.M.

**"LEED @ GREEN ASSOCIATE (GA) TRAINING
AND CERTIFICATION FOR THE BUREAU
OF ENVIRONMENTAL COASTAL QUALITY,
DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO **MS. SAM SABLAN** BY EMAIL AT ssablan@dcrm.gov.mp. **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS JANUARY 06, 2020.** RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

NMI Supreme Court affirms man's 5-year sentence

The Supreme Court affirmed Friday the five-year sentence the CNMI Superior Court had imposed on Mariano Quitugua Falig Jr.

In its opinion in *Commonwealth v. Mariano Quitugua Falig, Jr.*, the high court ruled that the five-year sentence against Falig is reasonable.

In 2016, Falig pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine and to violation of his probation conditions. The trial court sentenced him to five years, with one year of parole eligibility after four years served.

On appeal, Falig argued:

(1) the trial court mechanically imposed his sentence; and (2) the trial court failed to properly individualize his sentence. Based on these reasons, he asked the Supreme Court to vacate his sentence and return his case to the trial court to be sentenced by a different judge.

The Supreme Court found that the court's prior record of sentencing defendants for this type of crime, comments, and consideration of the presentencing report, the parties' arguments, and Falig's prior record did not indicate a mechanical sentencing policy.

While the five-year sentence may be harsh, a reasonable person would hand down a similar sentence. The trial

court gave particular attention to Falig's criminal record and employment history, as well as the temporary restraining or-

ders issued against him. These factors provided reasonable grounds to sentence Falig to the maximum sentence.

The high court's full opinion is available at <http://cnmi-law.org/pdf/supreme/2019-MP-11.pdf>. (PR)

Tinian Hot Pepper Festival in Feb.

The 16th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival will be held over the Presidents Day weekend on Feb. 15-16, 2020.

Activities will include dances, bands, and other live entertainment; cooking competitions, indigenous craft sales; and more. Festivalgoers will have the chance to purchase a variety of local dishes, join the *umang* (hermit crab) races, participate in sports activities, and join the hot pepper eating

competition, itself. In addition, the 65K Pika Bike Race on Feb. 15 will begin at 6am.

"We're looking forward to a great Tinian Hot Pepper Festival in 2020, and we invite everyone to join the festivities," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo. "The festival is one of the best times of the year to visit Tinian and enjoy the community and culture at its best."

The event is sponsored by the Tinian Mayor's Office and other MVA members. Air service between Saipan and Tinian is provided by Star Marianas and takes about 15 minutes. Airport shuttle will be offered by the MVA to and from the festival site. Accommodations are available at Tinian Ocean View, Lorilynn's Hotel, Tinian Street Motel, Fleming Hotel, Green Lion House Hotel, and the Marpo Valley Inn. Free camping is avail-

able at Kammer Beach, Taga Beach (toilets, barbecue pits, and outdoor showers available) and at the adjacent Tachogna Beach (toilets, barbecue pits, and indoor showers available).

For more information, contact MVA Tinian field operations supervisor Vida Borja at 433-9365 or email vborja@mymarianas.com or MVA community project specialist Ray Villagomez at 664-3210 or rvillagomez@mymarianas.com. (PR)



CAREER EXPLORATION DAY

Marianas High School student Lillian Podziewski, right, is welcomed by Marianas Visitors Authority administrative assistant/receptionist Sheri Llagas at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's Student Career Exploration Day on Dec. 4, 2019. Podziewski explored her interests in culture, journalism, and sociology with a tour and briefing of how each of the divisions of the MVA helps promote the destination.

MVA

Public warned of rough seas until Saturday

Fresh to strong trade winds will continue to produce hazardous conditions for small craft for the next several days. The stronger winds will result in seas of 8 to 11 feet.

A small craft advisory is in effect on coastal waters on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota until 6am Saturday. The public is also being warned that there is a high rip current risk now in effect through 6am Saturday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, east-northeast winds of 15 to 25 knots with frequent gusts to 30 knots and combined seas of 8 to 11 feet is producing fresh to strong winds and rough seas.

Winds and waves could push mariners off course or wreck or capsize their vessels. The highest winds and seas will be east of the islands.

A small craft advisory

means that wind speeds of 15 to 25 knots with gusts up to 30 knots are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid sailing in these conditions.

Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. The high risk of rip currents could extend to north facing reefs. On Obyan Beach on Saipan, the high risk could extend to south facing reefs.

Swim near a lifeguard if possible and never swim alone. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. The public is advised to avoid venturing out along east and south facing reefs and beaches. Strong rip currents will be life threatening.

(Saipan Tribune)

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'Paskong Pinoy' draws hundreds

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The annual *Paskong Pinoy* organized by the United Filipino Organization drew a large crowd to the Marianas Business Plaza's covered parking lot from morning to night last Sunday, with hundreds showing their support for the organization's largest event of the year.

UFO president Mar Masilungan believes it could be one of UFO's largest *Paskong Pinoy* events ever. "It was a very successful event



Members of the United Filipino Organization pose for a photo during the *Paskong Pinoy* last Sunday at the Marianas Business Plaza parking lot.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



The *Paskong Pinoy* 2019 highlight, the *Pera O Kahon* game, gained the participation of dozens last Sunday at the Marianas Business Plaza parking area.

KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA



All the volunteers of the 2019 *Paskong Pinoy* event pose for a photo last Sunday at the Marianas Business Plaza parking lot.

KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

and...I think this was one of the bigger events...in comparison [to previous *Pistang Pinoy*s because the crowd was big and they stayed until the last minute and they were all here to support the program," he said.

The highlight of the night was the *Pera O Kahon* game show. The gist of the game is that the player would choose one box out of five. Each box contains a prize, but only one box contained the \$1,000 cash prize. The player is offered money for the box and is given the option to choose the cash or the box.

"No one was not able to get the prize so we decided to raffle out an additional \$200 just to cover that because they didn't get anything," Masilungan said.

Other highlights of the evening were the *parol* (Christmas lantern)-making competition, Christmas carol competition, and a raffle drawing. There were also live music and performances.

For his first *Paskong Pinoy* as president, Masilungan said the advantage he had this year was the number of volunteers, with over 40 men and women dedicating their time to the preparation of *Paskong Pinoy*.

"It turned out really good, especially since this is my first time handling this kind of event, I'm proud that we had so many volunteers that came out to help prepare. That was the biggest advantage for me. Of course, the TSL Foundation was our major sponsor so, without their sponsorship, I don't know if we could have had this event," he said.

Masilungan also credited many other sponsors, both minor and major, for the event's success.

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Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

The internet is 50 years old. Will we survive the next 50 years?

Beyond academia, few people in 1969 knew of the internet's existence, and those who did probably never imagined how it would change the world for good and bad. After all, those who witnessed inventor Samuel F.B. Morse's four word telegraph dispatch—"What Hath God Wrought?"—from the U.S. Capitol to Alfred Vail at a railroad station in Baltimore in 1844 couldn't have foreseen what was coming.

The telegraph connected far-flung communities, and the internet has done the same during its first 50 years. More than 4.9 billion people—more than half the world's population—use the network of connected computers. In the past half-century, the internet has become a conduit for incredible for good, including wealth creation, and surprising bad, including surveillance and cybercrime.

So we perused the online writings of futurists to garner a glimpse about what the future may hold. We discovered a couple of disquieting trends.

The first is the challenge of regulating internet activities that transcend national borders. The second is assessing the veracity of ideas and data in a world where people have access to more information on mobile phones and other devices than previous generations could tap into even if they visited one of the world's great libraries. But since not everything on the internet is pure, the responses of governments, individuals and companies to these challenges will fundamentally determine how the internet will evolve in the future.

The internet will be what we make it, but the path forward will wind through mazes of ethical, legal and moral dilemmas. How much privacy should users expect? What rules and protections will exist to deter financial fraud, identity theft, sex trafficking and other abuses? And globally, whose vision of the internet will prevail—the democratic internet we love and hate, or the blunt-force authoritarian alternative that China and other totalitarian governments want?

An outcome in favor of an open, competitive internet built on rules depends on the global commitments to jointly improve online security, provide basic rights and promote economic fairness. And these are not certainties, warn futurists. "How technology affects people and society depends in large part on what values we embed into the design of these technologies, and who controls them," said Micah Altman, head scientist in the program on information science at MIT Libraries in a recent Pew Research study.

We suspect Altman is right. We should expect revolutionary changes in transportation, manufacturing, communications, education and just about every segment of life, as well as warfare and geopolitics. But across the globe, we have seen troubling examples of personal data being weaponized, the radicalization of pliable young minds, the exploitation of

See **INTERNET** on Next Page

It's not too late to save the birds of North America

Over three weeks starting Saturday, thousands of birders in the Western Hemisphere will take part in the annual, 119-year-old Audubon Christmas Bird Count. These tallies are conducted in prearranged circles within a seven-mile radius of a central point. At least 30 such circles exist in Southern California, and counts in each are held during a planned 24-hour period, rain or shine.

Bird lovers will no doubt list California scrub jays and acorn woodpeckers, but they may also catch glimpses of rarer travelers, such as a palm warbler or a thick-billed kingbird that stayed to spend the winter.

The Christmas count is usually a welcome ritual for bird lovers and naturalists. This year, however, it will be something of a grim reckoning. In September, a team of scientists published an ambitious study of more than 500 North American bird species, painstakingly comparing counts over time. The results made headlines and shocked even experts: There are almost 3 billion fewer birds in North America than there were 50 years ago. Among the vanishing are some species—meadowlarks and finches, for instance—that used to be abundant.

I have studied birds, taught about birds and written books about birds since the late 1970s in Southern California, and I've observed what those scientists documented: As we humans seize more and more wildlife habitat over time, the birds begin to disappear.

The Anthropocene—our era of human domination—has filled local lagoons with condo developments, polluted rivers and drained salt marshes. Freeways crisscross California's coastal sagebrush bluffs, and as for grasslands, they have disappeared from the foothills. Fire, often caused by human negligence, has ravaged the remaining pockets of coniferous forest in our mountains.

Where a bird lives, forages, nests and raises young is its home range, its habitat. When that habitat is destroyed or fractured, a species will fail to reproduce. It will leave or perish.

And yet the urgent problem of habitat loss can be remedied.

At the San Joaquin Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary in Orange County, a former duck club is now a restored wetland within a stone's throw of high-rises and shopping malls. A rare shorebird turned up there in August—a common ringed plover. This tiny bird with a thick black breast band nests in Greenland and on Canadian Arctic islands; it usually heads to the west coast of Africa rather than landing in Orange County.

In the path of jumbo jets taking off from Los Angeles International Airport, where a development was razed to make way for runways, volunteers have restored sand dunes and coastal sage scrub. Last winter, 10 burrowing owls—a California "species of special concern"—were counted there, in a spot they haven't frequented in decades. The owls, along with the California gnat-

By **JOAN EASTON LENTZ**

Los Angeles Times



Joan Easton Lentz's latest book is *A Naturalist's Guide to the Santa Barbara Region*.

catcher and the El Segundo blue butterfly, don't seem to mind the roar of the jet engines. In my home territory, Santa Barbara, there is a particularly spectacular example of what is possible. Now part of the UC Santa Barbara campus, a former golf course north of the university built on marsh upland has been carefully restored. More than 10 years ago, the Trust for Public Land purchased the then-decrepit Ocean Meadows course, which was handed over to the Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration at the university. Fundraising went into high gear, partnerships were developed, scientists and planners weighed in, and so did the site's neighboring homeowners.

The chances for restoration were rich and varied: salt marsh, perennial grassland mesa and peripheral uplands closer to the condo developments. Bulldozers widened a former creek bed and the restoration plan reconstituted the natural watershed. University students, citizens and schoolchildren gathered seed from native plants, nurtured the seedlings and then replanted the site. The 136-acre North Campus Open Space opened in 2018. Years ago, I and fellow birders used to stand wistfully at the margins of the old private golf course, looking through our binoculars to see what species remained after the marsh was disturbed. Last month, I strolled along a level path, surrounded by watery inlets and tall reeds, watching ducks and shorebirds feed. On a distant hillside, a burrowing owl had already claimed one of the "hibernacula," a manmade burrow. Western meadowlarks were visiting the newly planted grassland portion. One birder, posting on the North Campus Open Space eBird list, tallied 46 species in just over two hours earlier this month.

The North Campus restoration is the Anthropocene at its best: humans mitigating our own destructive impact in grand style. But even a more minimal effort—a pocket park in an urban center, a small plot of restored shoreline plants—can yield a big payoff for wildlife, not to mention people. And of course, the best solution for the problem of disappearing birds is not to destroy their precious habitat in the first place.

As development squeezes out nature, we are all the losers. Save the birds and you are saving our natural world. It's not too late.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Nothing lasts forever: Buy-sell agreements between business owners

People are encouraged to start businesses. And many do. But few people think about what happens when that business comes to end. For a company owned by a single person, neglecting to think about the end is usually a manageable mistake. But for companies owned by two or more people, failing to plan is an invitation to a parade of pain when an eventual ownership change occurs.

Consider some common scenarios. Imagine that Harry and Wanda co-owned and operated a clothing store for a decade. What happens if Wanda wants to sell her stake in the business? In most cases, she'll struggle to get paid what her stake is worth because Harry likely won't want to buy Wanda out—at least not at a price that Wanda will want. And no one else will likely fill the gap because it's normally difficult to sell part of a private business to an outsider.

What if Wanda gets into deep debt and her lender takes over her interest in the business? Harry may have to run the business with an owner he never asked for or anticipated.

What if Wanda develops Alzheimer's disease? Then Harry may have to pick up Wanda's slack, doing double duty without a concurrent increase of the profits.

What if Wanda gets divorced and her husband receives half of Wanda's ownership in the business? Then Harry may have to own and operate a business alongside feuding divorcees. Sounds fun, doesn't it?

What if Wanda dies and passes her ownership to her kids? Then Harry may have to run the business on his own but split the profit with the kids. Or he may have to run the business with kids, who may or may not be capable business partners.

What if Wanda's kids sell their chunk of the business to Tommy whose vision for the business clashes with Harry's? Then Harry needs to either sell his stake, patch things up with Tommy, or find a way to force Tommy out.

That's a big list of problems. But they highlight a fundamental reality of businesses with more than one owner: Eventually one of the owners will stop being an owner. Maybe they've had enough and want to cash out. Maybe they become disabled. Or maybe they die. But one way or another, ownership of the business will change.

In planning for the inevitable, one way to minimize conflicts and maximize fairness is to create a buy-sell agreement, which is a contract between co-owners about the many ways that the partnership may come to an end. So, for example, a buy-sell agreement will spell out when an owner can sell their interests, who they can sell them to, and for how much. It will also address death, disability, divorce, and bankruptcy. In other words, a buy-sell agreement is the business equivalent of a will and a prenuptial agreement rolled into one.

What can a buy-sell agreement do for you?

First, it can guarantee a buyer when you want to sell. Having this escape clause is critical because selling a private business, especially a minority stake of a business, is hard. And even if you succeed, you will likely receive far less than you expect. The solution is a forced-buyout clause where the owners agree well in advance on the terms for one owner to buy out the other. The clause provides a ready market for selling your interest when you want to walk away.

Second, a buy-sell agreement will provide tools for current owners to maintain control of the business. This becomes important when one owner retires, gets divorced, files for bankruptcy, becomes disabled, or dies. To protect from these scenarios, generally the other owners will have the ability to buy out an owner going through one of these events.

Third, a buy-sell agreement will normally set a price for the buyout. Setting this price well beforehand eliminates a major source of litigation. The reason is that valuing a business is not an exact science. There are several reasonable ways to do so. But each approach will produce a different number. Naturally, the selling owner will prefer a valuation approach yielding the

FINE PRINT

By **JORDAN SUNDELL**

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Jordan Sundell is a lawyer primarily practicing business, real estate, estate-planning, and asset-protection law. He formerly worked for the CNMI Supreme Court and Bridge Capital and is now general counsel for several real-estate companies, including JZ Group. His columns—focused mainly on real estate, small business, and estate planning—are published every other Tuesday. Be sure to like the Fine Print on Facebook!

highest price whereas the buying owner will gravitate toward a valuation method producing a lower price. Such an environment is fertile ground for disagreements and, thus, lawsuits.

Fourth, a buy-sell agreement can establish how to pay for the buyout. Funding is huge because buying out a business is seldom cheap. It's important to plan where the money is going to come from well before any of the owners want to depart. In some cases, businesses will agree to pay the departing owner in several installments. In other cases, the business creates a buy-out fund and then invests in it as the business grows. And yet another approach is for the business or each owner to take out life and disability insurance on the other owners, the proceeds of which will fund a buyout if an owner dies or becomes disabled.

Bottom line: If you co-own a business, talk with your co-owners about the scenarios discussed in this article because its much easier to solve these issues now rather than after the event has taken place.

This column is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be taken as legal advice. For your specific case, consult a lawyer.

INTERNET

From Page 10

political beliefs and efforts to sow division and mistrust.

We cannot take for granted that the internet will remain safe for free expression and open markets. China is investing billions in artificial intelligence and other next-generation technologies designed to take control of the rules of cyberspace from the market economies of the West, setting the stage for an existential clash between Western style democratization of the internet and the censorship-heavy approach of China.

So why is that problematic? China would impose technical standards that require foreign companies to build their products to meet China's standards, and government surveillance policies. The logical outcome is that the Chinese government would mandate that data be stored on servers in China and would block the transfer of data outside China except on its terms. And this is made more problematic if China uses facial recognition and other biometrics with no specific laws to protect individual rights. This is a major step away from freedom and toward greater control of content and dissent.

In 50 years, the internet we know could be different in other ways, too. Regulators in Europe and the United States are looking for ways to address mounting concerns about how personal data is being collected and used. Companies like Google and Facebook could face serious legal challenges to their market clout and treatment of personal data, and the trickle-down impact of regulation could alter the vibrancy of the internet and the overall competitive landscape. And, of course, numerous studies show that the digital divide is widening, a chasm that poses questions about whether opportunities for success can and will be open to all.

The internet has come a long way since 1969, the year man walked on the moon, the Beatles made their last public appearance and the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at 800. This much is certain: The internet—or whatever new networking technologies are on the horizon—will test our resolve to make these technologies work for our betterment, not against it.

(c)2019 The Dallas Morning News

Economic inequity has gone bananas

Three collectors recently took home some unconventional offerings from Art Basel, a famous art show held annually in Miami Beach. Each artwork consisted of a banana duct-taped to a wall. Two sold for \$120,000, one for \$150,000.

For a banana. And some tape.

Unfortunately, this fruity farce is just one small sign of the growing gap between the whims of the absurdly wealthy and the challenges facing everyone else.

During the same week as the banana bonanza in Miami Beach, the Trump administration announced its plans to slash the rolls of the nation's nutrition assistance program. That means nearly 700,000 people face the prospect of going hungry when the new rules take effect on April 1.

The Trump administration's action is part of a multi-part effort to dramatically reduce the scale of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, sometimes called food stamps). If other elements of the plan go forward, nearly 3 million additional people could be cut from the program, and nearly a million school children would lose free or reduced lunches.

Let them eat banana cake?

The new series of rule changes proposed by Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue would eliminate work-requirement exemptions for single adults living in areas without job prospects, remove families with incomes up to 200% of the poverty level, and cut families who have more than just \$2,250 in assets—or \$3,500, if someone in the family has a disability.

Put differently, the changes would make people who hold assets totaling the value of a rusted old Honda Civic ineligible for food assistance.

And as this is happening, the rich are making conspicuous displays of their good fortune.

A few miles from where the infamous duct-taped banana was sold, a hedge-fund billionaire just bought his fourth Palm Beach

By **JOSH HOXIE**

Tribune News Service



Josh Hoxie, an associate fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, is currently completing a master of social work program at Boston College. This column was produced for the Progressive Media Project, which is run by The Progressive magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.

vacation home for \$111 million. Fourth! Meanwhile, the federal minimum wage pays less than the cost of living in every major city in the country. And it hasn't gone up in 10 years.

It might be funny if it weren't so appalling.






The United States is one of the wealthiest countries in the world. We have ample resources here to provide for basic human needs and ensure that people will at least not starve.

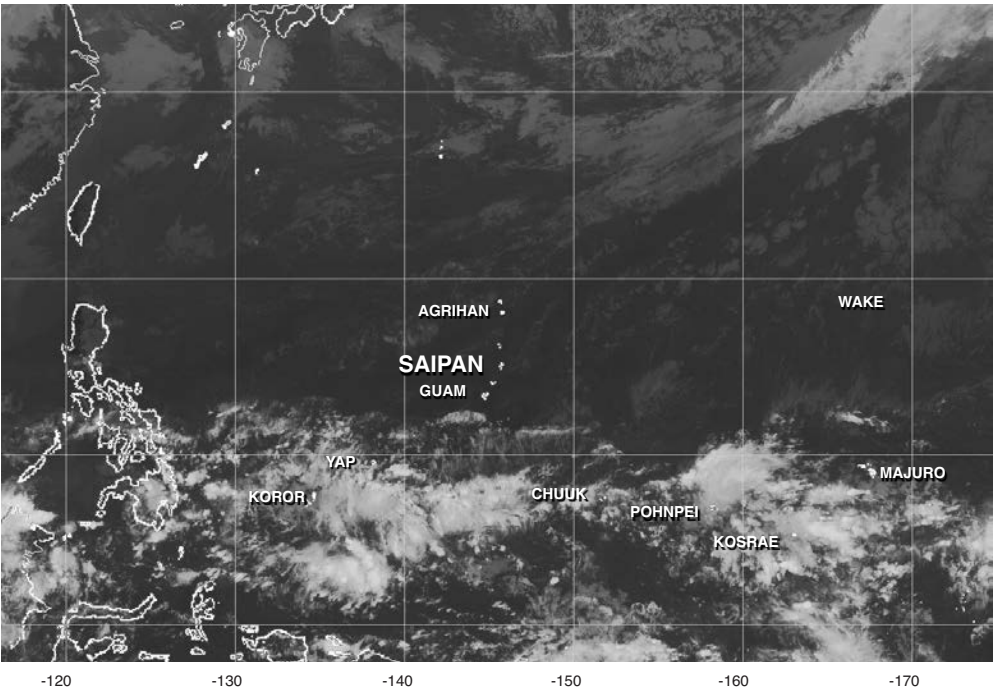
Just three billionaires own more wealth than the bottom half of the country combined, my colleague Chuck Collins and I found in a study for the Institute for Policy Studies last year. Meanwhile, one in seven kids will go to bed hungry tonight—and a lot more in the coming months, if the proposed Trump administration rules go into effect.

A tax on immense wealth would put a check on the concentration of wealth at the top, as Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., have proposed. This could raise enough revenue to make sure everyone has enough to eat, and enjoy other basic human rights like medical care.

There is no justification for the Trump administration slashing nutrition assistance to the poor. And as a society, we cannot afford to tolerate a few people being wealthy enough to throw six figures at rotting bananas while millions go hungry.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
									
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly sunny with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Breezy Saturday.	
86°	75°	86°	76°	86°	75°	86°	75°	86°	76°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 6:30 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2019
WESTERN NORTH PACIFIC BETWEEN EQUATOR AND 25N FROM 130E TO 180.

Guam weather radar shows almost no showers within the Marianas waters. The VAD wind profile indicates northeast winds of 7 to 12 knots just off the surface which increase to between 20 and 25 knots from two thousand to eight thousand feet. The buoys reveal combined seas of 7 to 10 feet composed of east-northeast trade-wind waves and swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an up-dated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA ▼ ▲ °F		
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Palau	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	83° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	83° / 77°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°

AROUND THE GLOBE ▼ ▲ °F		
Auckland	Showers	66° / 57°
Beijing	Sunny	34° / 16°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	75° / 66°
Honolulu	Windy	83° / 73°
London	Rain	45° / 34°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	78° / 58°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 77°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	99° / 66°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	82° / 72°
New York	Rain	40° / 32°
Osaka	Showers	61° / 45°
Paris	Showers	57° / 41°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	54° / 37°
Rome	Showers	63° / 50°
Salem	Rain	65° / 32°
San Francisco	Cloudy	55° / 46°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	37° / 21°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	63° / 45°
Washington, DC	Rain	49° / 32°



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET		
5:05 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.46
12:29 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.77
6:16 PM	LOW TIDE	1.06
10:33 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.50

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Wednesday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Thursday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Friday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Saturday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	10:52 PM	10:45 PM
Wednesday	-	11:40 AM	11:43 PM
Thursday	-	-	12:25 PM
Friday	-	12:40 AM	1:08 PM
Saturday	-	1:36 AM	1:52 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 2, 2019							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA105	6:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6	UA104	4:45pm	5:26pm	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
SKY811	10:15am	3:00pm	Daily	SKY816	4:35pm	7:30pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
				SKY816	5:05pm	8:00pm	6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451	3:20am	6:30am	Daily	7C3452	9:35pm	2:30am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
				7C3452	10:05pm	2:30am+1	3
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:05am	6:05am	Daily	OZ6233	8:00am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6
OZ626	2:10am	6:05am	1	OZ623	8:55am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7
OZ626	2:50am	6:25am	3, 7	7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 4, 5, 6	TW309	11:10am	4:25pm	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:35am	Daily	OZ625	7:30pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ6243	3:20pm	7:10pm	2, 4, 6	TW307	7:45pm	1:05am+1	Daily
OZ624	3:50pm	7:40pm	1, 3, 5, 7	OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily	7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily
TW310	5:25pm	10:15pm	Daily				
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:50am	4, 7	3U8647	10:30pm	4:30am+1	3, 6
SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)				HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN			
JD396	7:30am	12:05pm	1	JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4	JD395	8:50pm	5:00am+1	7
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU764	1:30am	6:00am	3, 5, 7	MU763	4:50pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/701	2:10am	10:35am	1 via ICN	UA184/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:35am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	Daily via GUM	OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	UA192/174	10:40pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA156/183	6:20pm	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via GUM	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA156/193	6:20pm	11:50pm	2 via GUM-ROR	OZ704/6233	11:45pm	1:20pm+1	1, 3, 5 via ICN
				OZ704/623	11:45pm	2:30pm+1	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ746/6233	12:35am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ746/623	12:35am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:40am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ6243/9661	3:20pm	11:15pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ624/9661	3:50pm	11:15pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN	UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
				UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, BC SkyMark ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.							
SAIPAN TO ROTA				1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily	1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily	1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
				1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
				1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
				1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
				1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily	2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
GUAM TO ROTA				2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
				2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
				2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
				2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
				2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
				2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
				2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
				2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
				2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
				2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY				
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily				
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily				

Business

Cybersecurity company looking for ‘analysts’

By BEA CABRERA
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CORRESPONDENT

InteliSecure, a Colorado-based company and a provider of critical data security services, announced its intention of opening an office and accessing manpower in the CNMI at a public forum held last Wednesday at the Latte Training Academy office located at the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe.

According to InteliSecure vice president Graham Logsdon, they help organizations protect their critical data in digital form and help guide different departments within the organization the safest way to share sensitive data.

“Every employee has a Social Security Number and when that data is mistakenly or inappropriately disclosed to a lot of parties especially to criminal organizations around the world, employers don’t want that to happen... so we help organizations protect critical data such as SSN numbers, intellectual property to name a few from those kinds of situations,” he said.

“Our security operation centers monitor the use of data inside an organization. If someone decides to download 80,000 SSN numbers and put it in a USB stick, we would help that organization



identify when it happened and ultimately, prevent that from happening,” he added.

Currently, InteliSecure has security operations in the United Kingdom and Denver, Colorado. “We want to have a presence in the Asia Pacific region and we love the idea that we can do this in America in which the CNMI is a part of. Our clients love what America offers them in terms of data protection and rule of law so

we come here to set up a security center,” Logsdon said.

“We are looking for talents in the CNMI to work as ‘analysts’ in the company who will work in conjunction with our analysts in the UK and Denver... they will monitor our clients, make sure that they are safe from any activities that we feel are suspicious or dangerous and so we can help them mitigate the risk of that,” Logsdon added.

Normally, cyber security

companies will find someone who holds a degree or masters in computer science, but Logsdon takes a different route in hiring people. “We are

BEA CABRERA

InteliSecure is eyeing the CNMI to establish its third security operations center and access to local talents. From left, InteliSecure director of Client Strategy Michael Berruti, chief financial officer Gary Schlisner, vice president Graham Logsdon, and director for Security Operations Jose Padilla.

not looking for someone with the best and most impressive cyber security resume...we hire people who are willing to learn, eager for knowledge, hardworking, and we want them to grow in the organization...,” he said.

“Analysts will be trained in very unique technologies such as data classification, cloud access security brokers, secure web gateways, and security information management...we encourage growth within the company...everyone in the company who are in a management or leadership position now came in an entry level position and has grown and promoted,” he added.

InteliSecure is working closely with Latte Training Academy who will give applicants initial training, testing, and certification and, with the CNMI Department of Labor, will provide assistance with job requirements, schedule of seminars and trainings.

Logsdon clarified that they are not simply outsourcing. “This is not outsourcing as this is not about the cost of doing business, how can we lower operations. This is about our presence in a U.S. territory and we think it is a great place to do business and tapping talents,” he said.

InteliSecure is one of the fastest growing companies in the United States. At the Prestigious Inc. 5000 annual awards held last year, they were ranked number 2,659 because of their three-year revenue growth of 158%. InteliSecure plans to open their office in the CNMI early next year.

For more information, go to www.lattetrainingacademy.com

Japan, S. Korea hold export talks, seek dispute solution

TOKYO (AP)—Senior officials from Japan and South Korea were holding talks Monday on high-tech exports for the first time since Tokyo tightened controls on South Korean semiconductor parts earlier this year.

The director-general level meeting was taking place in Tokyo between Yoichi Iida of Japan’s Trade Control Department and his South Korean counterpart, Lee Ho-hyeon. The two officials shook hands at the beginning of the talks, though they made no opening remarks to the media.

A meeting of this level had not been held in more than three years.

Japan in July tightened trade controls on South Korea materials used in smartphones, television screens and other high-tech products, citing national security concerns. Japan also downgraded South Korea a month later from a list of preferential trade partners.

South Korea has demanded Japan reverse the measures, saying Tokyo has weapon-

ized export controls in retaliation for South Korean court rulings demanding Japanese companies pay compensation to former Korean laborers over their treatment during Japan’s 1910-1945 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula. Tokyo has pressed Seoul to stick with a 1965 agreement in resolving their dispute over wartime Korean laborers, criticizing the court decisions a violation to international law.

Japan’s trade curbs against South Korea have led to subsequent retaliatory measures that spilled into the area of national security, with Seoul threatening to abandon a key military intelligence sharing pact with Tokyo.

The pact was saved just hours before its expiration in November, following Washington’s repeated pressure and with Tokyo agreeing to resume export control talks requested by Seoul.

Monday’s talks come a week ahead of a planned summit between the two countries and China.

Japanese and South Ko-

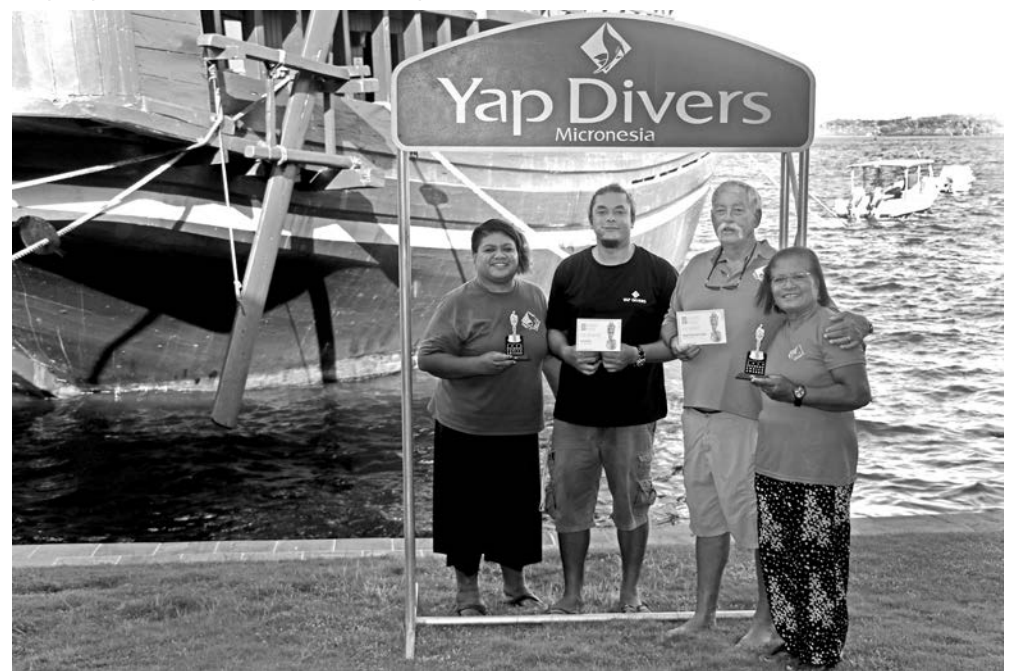
rean foreign ministers, Toshimitsu Motegi and Kan Geun-wha, both attending the Asia-Europe Meeting in Madrid, Spain, talked briefly and welcomed their trade officials’ meeting in Tokyo, Japanese officials said. The two sides also agreed to cooperate closely on threats from North Korea and to achieve next week’s summit.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said that Japan’s export control measures are part of the country’s international responsibility and that “they are not something that we decide by negotiating with a trade partner.”

“Our policy has been consistent and there is no change to our position,” Suga said, referring to Japan’s position on the wartime compensation issue. “We urge South Korea to act wisely.”

South Korean national assembly speaker Moon Hee-san is seeking to set up a compensation fund for the Korean wartime laborers with an option that allows Japanese companies to chip in donations as a compromise.

Yap’s premiere dive resort top choice of divers from around the world



JMCLURE

The Acker family shows off their 2019 *Scuba Diving Magazine* Readers Choice awards. From left, Numie, hotel manager; O.P., Dive Operations manager; Bill, CEO/founder; and his wife Patricia, originator of Taro Leaf Spa and Blue Planet Kayak Tours.

COLONIA, Yap—There are awards and then there are awards. The two captured this past month by Yap’s premiere dive resort, Manta Ray Bay Resort and Yap Divers, are among the most coveted in the dive industry because divers themselves do the voting.

Chosen by readers of Florida-based *Scuba Diving Magazine*, “the leading scuba magazine for divers who live to dive,” and presented during DEMA, the Diving Equipment & Marketing Association Show, held Nov. 13-16 in Orlando, Florida, the popular dive resort was

among the five top overall resorts in the Pacific and Indian Ocean region to receive an “excellent” score in two categories: Best Dive Resort and Best Dive Shop.

The publication invites readers to “evaluate the dive resorts they’ve visited within the past two years on a variety of subjects, and to pick the best dive resort they’ve ever visited” for the annual poll.

“I’ve been diving in Yap for nearly 40 years,” said Manta Ray owner Bill Acker, “and I love introducing other divers to everything that Yap has to

offer both in the water and on land.” Bill realized his dream of opening Yap’s first dive shop in 1986. Since then, the small, family-owned resort has grown into a luxury destination that attracts an average of 1,000 divers annually from all over the world.

“These awards prove that we’ve done what we set out to do!” Bill exclaimed in his native Texas twang.

For more information: www.mantaray.com and <https://www.scubadiving.com/scuba-divings-2020-readers-choice-awards-rank-worlds-best-diving#page-4>. (PR)

Nation

Senate impeachment trial in focus ahead of House vote

WASHINGTON (AP)—Senate Democrats are pushing for testimony from top White House officials in the rare impeachment trial that is fast becoming the next battleground ahead of House voting that is all but certain to result in President Donald Trump's impeachment.

Trump faces two articles of impeachment by House Democrats: abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. They point to Trump pressuring Ukraine to investigate 2020 political rival Joe Biden while withholding as leverage military aid the country relies to counter Russia as well as his efforts to block the House investigation.

Only the fourth U.S. president to be charged in impeachment proceedings, Trump has insisted he has done nothing wrong. Votes are set for Wednesday in the House. But already attention is turning to the Senate trial, where the Republicans are expected to acquit Trump in January.

"There ought to be a fair trial where the whole truth comes out," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer told reporters Sunday in New York. "And I'm going to work to get that done."

The top Senate Democrat called for new evidence and testimony from former national security adviser John Bolton, acting White House chief of



In this Monday, Dec. 9, 2019, file photo, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., speaks to reporters on Capitol Hill in Washington.

staff Mick Mulvaney and two others as part of a detailed proposal outlined in a letter Sunday to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to spur negotiations with the GOP.

"This trial must be one that is fair, that considers all of the relevant facts," Schumer wrote. "The trial must be

one that not only hears all of the evidence and adjudicates the case fairly; it must also pass the fairness test with the American people."

Trump has expressed interest in a robust trial that would not only clear him of the charges in the Senate but also vindicate him, but his de-

sire for a lengthy proceeding is something Senate Republicans are hoping to avoid.

A spokesman for McCon-

nell said the two Senate leaders are expected to meet. They are expected to discuss how to conduct the trial, much as the

Democrats and Republicans did during Bill Clinton's impeachment two decades ago.

"Leader McConnell has made it clear he plans to meet with Leader Schumer to discuss the contours of a trial soon," McConnell spokesman Doug Andres said. "That timeline has not changed."

The witness list will be key to the proceedings.

Despite Republican control in the Senate, McConnell's slim 53-47 majority limits his ability to steer the impeachment trial. It takes 51 votes to approve most motions in the proceedings, even to set the rules, which means the leader can only afford to lose two Republican senators and still pass his preferred options.

Some Republican senators may feel pressure from Democrats to call additional witnesses or expand the proceedings, especially those up for reelection next year in swing states where voters are split in their views of Trump.

At the same time, Democrats face political risks if Republicans lean into Trump's demands for a showier trial, summoning Biden or his son, Hunter Biden, or others to appear.

Report: Whistleblower says ICE denied healthcare to migrants

HOUSTON (AP)—A whistleblower report provided to BuzzFeed News alleges U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has "systematically provided inadequate medical and mental health care" to detained migrants, leading to complications that included the removal of part of an 8-year-old boy's forehead.

The report published Thursday says poor medical care contributed to two preventable surgeries and contributed to four deaths in detention. It renewed harsh criticism from migrant advocates and Democrats of President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown, during which there have been reports of squalid conditions in packed cells and crying children left to fend for themselves after being taken from their parents.

At the Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia, a man who was bleeding through his skin continued to receive aspirin even though he had extremely thin blood. The man was eventually taken to a hospital in critical

condition and not expected to survive, according to a report summarizing the complaint that was delivered to ICE leadership in March.

In Arizona, a detainee at the Eloy Federal Contract Facility had "worsening psychosis-related symptoms, but the psychiatrist failed to treat him," the report says.

And at the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas, a boy was initially diagnosed with an external ear infection, only to have seizures two weeks later. Doctors at the hospital diagnosed him with Pott's puffy tumor, an infection that leads to abscesses formed under the skull. They treated it by extracting part of the boy's frontal bone, BuzzFeed reported.

ICE said in a statement that it "takes very seriously the health, safety and welfare of those in our care, including those who come into ICE custody with prior medical conditions or who have never before received appropriate medical care."

The BuzzFeed report pro-

vides the latest series of allegations that ICE and other immigration agencies don't properly care for the people in their custody as the Trump administration has ramped up its use of detention.

ProPublica last week revealed that surveillance video showed a 16-year-old boy who died of the flu at a Border Patrol station in South Texas laid unresponsive in his cell for several hours before someone noticed. Carlos is one of six children to have died after being detained by border agents since last December.

And advocates have long warned that the ICE Health Service Corps misdiagnoses or disregards symptoms.

The complaint obtained by BuzzFeed lists four adults who died in ICE custody in 2017 and 2018. After one person at Eloy was listed as dying of coronary heart disease, a person alleged that was "very misleading" and didn't account for "the lack of readily available emergency medications" or the mistakes of the facility's psychiatrist.

ACROSS THE NATION

Cyberattack on New Orleans city computers called 'minimal'

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Officials announced Saturday that no data was held for ransom and that a recovery operation is getting underway after a cyberattack a day earlier triggered a shutdown of city government computers in New Orleans. Chief Information Officer Kim LaGrue, speaking at a news conference with Mayor LaToya Cantrell and others, said the city hadn't heard from any hackers or received any demands. NOLA.com reported that LaGrue described the cyberattack as "minimal" and that officials expect to move quickly to bring computers fully back online. The exact nature and extent of the attack were unclear, NOLA.com reported. It added that the mayor said about 4,000 computers will need to be scrubbed as a precaution and that 400 servers were affected. Crucial public safety services continued running normally Saturday as they did during Friday's cyberattack, officials stressed. But City Hall offices had to fall back Friday on pen and paper to keep doing business as computers were taken offline and certain offices closed.

Man whose info found on Jersey shooter nabbed on gun charge

KEYPORT, N.J. (AP)—A New Jersey man whose number was found in the back pocket of one of the perpetrators of last week's fatal attack on a Jewish market has been arrested for illegally possessing a weapon, federal authorities said. Ahmed A-Hady, of Keyport, 35, was charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm, the U.S. attorney's office said late Saturday. A-Hady hasn't been charged with providing any of the weapons used in Tuesday's bloody rampage in Jersey City. David Ander-

son and Francine Graham killed Jersey City Police Det. Joseph Seals in a cemetery and then stormed a kosher supermarket, killing three people before being killed themselves after a lengthy shootout with police, authorities have said. Afterward, a note was found in Anderson's pocket containing a telephone number and a Keyport address, according to authorities. The number belonged to A-Hady, and the address was for a storefront for a pawnshop, officials said. Records indicated that A-Hady had bought two handguns in 2007 before being convicted of a felony in 2012 that made him ineligible to own firearms.

Child fatally struck after Tennessee Christmas parade

MOUNT JULIET, Tenn. (AP)—A child was fatally struck at the end of a Christmas parade in Tennessee, authorities said. The child was hit Saturday by a pickup truck that was towing a trailer in a parking lot at Mount Juliet Middle School, police said in a news release. The Wilson County School District identified the child as a student at a local elementary school, but didn't give further details. "Our hearts are very heavy with deep sadness over today's tragic loss," the Wilson County School District said in an online message Saturday. "We lift our strongest prayers for the family during this extremely difficult time. Several officers responded to the scene and an ambulance had to be escorted through heavy traffic during the parade's ending, the police statement said. The Tennessee Highway Patrol is handling the investigation. Further details of the incident weren't immediately released, and a patrol spokesman didn't respond to a request for comment Sunday. A candlelight vigil was planned Sunday in front of the middle school where the child was hit.



Residents and rescuers check damaged structures following an earthquake that struck Padada, Davao del Sur province, southern Philippines on Sunday Dec. 15, 2019.

AP

3 dead, 7 missing in building downed by PH quake

PADADA, Philippines (AP)—Rescuers pulled out two bodies Monday from a three-story building that collapsed in a strong earthquake in the southern Philippines and scrambled to find at least seven more people who were trapped inside.

Army troops, police, firefighters and volunteers, armed with sound and motion detectors, located a third body

in the rubble of the building in Davao del Sur province's Padada town but could not immediately extricate the remains pinned in slabs of cement, Padada Mayor Pedro Caminero said.

At least five people died in Sunday's magnitude 6.9 quake that struck Padada and outlying rural towns, cities and provinces in a region that has

been battered by three deadly earthquakes in recent months. A child died after being hit by a collapsed wall in her house and a woman in her 70s died from a heart attack during the quake, officials said.

"We're looking for about seven more," Caminero said by phone from Padada.

Distraught relatives waited in a cordoned area as rescuers

worked overnight in search of their relatives.

Several shoppers managed to dash out of the building, which housed a grocery store, as the ground shook, including a number who were escorted out with injuries.

A total of 84 people were injured in the quake, officials said.

A city and four towns near the quake's epicenter were

still without power Monday, and classes were canceled in a broad area to give time for inspections of school buildings.

The Davao region has been hit by at least three powerful earthquakes in recent months, causing several deaths and scores of injuries and badly damaging houses, town halls, hotels, malls and hospitals.

The Philippine archipelago

lies on the so-called Pacific "Ring of fire," an arc of faults around the Pacific Ocean where most of the world's earthquakes occur. It's also lashed by about 20 typhoons and other severe storms each year, making the Southeast Asian nation of more than 100 million people one of the world's most disaster-prone countries.



ASIA BRIEFS

New Zealand observes silence 1 week after volcano killed 18

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—New Zealanders observed a minute's silence on Monday at the moment that a volcano erupted a week earlier, killing 18 people and leaving others with severe burns. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said that wherever people were in New Zealand or around the world, it was an opportunity to stand alongside those who had lost loved ones in the tragedy. "Together we can express our sorrow for those who have died and been hurt, and our support for their grieving families and friends," she said in a statement. Two bodies have yet to be recovered from the White Island eruption site after land and sea searches have so far come up empty-handed. Police have said they will continue looking. That has left the official death toll at 16, although authorities believe 18 people died, including several who died from their injuries in the week following the eruption in hospitals in New Zealand and Australia.

China's premier says HK bill turmoil damaged whole society

BEIJING (AP)—Turmoil over amendments to extradition legislation has damaged Hong Kong society on all fronts, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said Monday during a meeting with the territory's leader, Carrie Lam. Lam is in Beijing for talks with Li and Chinese President Xi Jinping. It's her first visit to Beijing since pro-democracy candidates swept local Hong Kong elections last month in a rebuke of how Lam has handled months of fiery anti-government protests. "In the past year, our politics, economy and society have really faced big problems," Lam said at her meeting with Li, who reiterated the central government's support for her administration. The mass demonstrations began in June in response to proposed legislation that would have al-

lowed Hong Kong residents to be tried for crimes in mainland China. While Lam has since withdrawn the bill, protesters have continued calling for broader democratic reforms and an independent inquiry into alleged police brutality. Some protesters have increasingly resorted to violence. A lull in clashes ended Sunday evening when protesters threw bricks at police officers, who in turn fired tear gas. According to the authorities, the rioters also set fires, blocked roads and smashed traffic lights with hammers. Video footage showed truncheon-wielding riot officers squirting pepper spray at a man in a group of journalists and ganging up to beat and manhandle him.

Indonesia nabs 2 suspected smugglers of leopard, lion cubs

PEKANBARU, Indonesia (AP)—Indonesian police said Sunday that they have arrested two men suspected of being part of a ring that poaches and trades in endangered animals and seized from them several lion and leopard cubs and dozens of turtles. One of the suspects, identified only as Yatno, was arrested Saturday in Pekanbaru, the capital of Riau province, after picking up suspicious boxes from a speedboat at a port in Dumai district, said Andri Sudarmadi, Riau police's chief detective. Police found several boxes containing four lion cubs, a leopard cub and 58 turtles in his van. The turtles and the leopard cub are listed as critically endangered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, or CITES, while the lion cubs are listed as endangered. Yatno's arrest led police to capture another suspect who was planning to sell the smuggled wildlife to a trader on Java island, Sudarmadi said at a news conference. The second suspect was identified only by his initials, IS. Sudarmadi said that the two men were allegedly part of an international trafficking syndicate and that they bought the haul from a smuggler in Malaysia.

US says it won't accept North Korea-set nuclear deadline

SEOUL, South Korea

(AP)—A senior U.S. diplomat said Monday that Washington won't accept a year-end deadline set by North Korea to make concessions in stalled nuclear talks and urged Pyongyang to return to a negotiating table immediately.

"On this point, let me be absolutely clear: The United States does not have a deadline," Stephen Biegun, the U.S. special representative for North Korea, told reporters. "We are fully aware of the strong potential for North Korea to conduct a major provocation in the days ahead. To say the least, such an action will be most unhelpful in achieving lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula."

Biegun, who was in Seoul for talks with South Korean officials, called on North Korea to sit down for talks.

"Let me speak directly to our counterparts in North Korea: It is time for us to do our jobs. Let's get this done. We

are here. And you know how to reach us," he said.

Biegun later held separate meetings with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and Unification Minister Kim Yeon-chul, Seoul's point man on North Korea. Moon's office said that during his visit to the presidential Blue House, Biegun said the Trump administration wouldn't give up on seeking diplomatic progress with North Korea, but it did not elaborate further.

It's unclear if North Korea will reach out to the U.S. to resolve their widening differences on how to achieve North Korean denuclearization.

Senior North Korean officials have recently said denuclearization is already off the negotiating table and have threatened to lift a self-imposed moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests. In past months, North Korea has also conducted a slew of short-range missile and other weapons tests.

World

No letup for UK lawmakers: Johnson presses ahead with Brexit

LONDON (AP)—There will be no letup for U.K. lawmakers worn out after Britain's bruising election campaign. Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set to begin "before Christmas" the push to secure Parliamentary approval for his Brexit deal.

Buoyed by its landslide victory in Thursday's election, Johnson's Conservative government plans to move fast to make good on his campaign mantra to "get Brexit done." That means ensuring legislation known as the Brexit withdrawal agreement bill is passed in time for the U.K. to complete its historic departure from the European Union by the current deadline of Jan. 31.

Conservative Party lawmaker Rishi Sunak on Sunday told the BBC that Brexit-enabling legislation will be "back to Parliament before Christmas."

The Conservatives won 365 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons. Labour took 203 seats, its worst total since 1935. With a Conservative majority of 80, the tortured wrangling that has been a hallmark of Brexit debates since Britain's 2016 referendum on its EU status should be consigned to history.

But once the Brexit legislation has passed, negotiations between London and Brussels will begin on a new deal covering their economic and strategic relationship. A transition period built into Johnson's Brexit deal means that trade between Britain and the bloc will remain smooth until the end of 2020. But if no pact is ready then, the United Kingdom could still face an economically damaging de-



A vendor places a British flag on his kiosk at Westminster Bridge in London, Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019.

parture from the EU, its main trading partner.

Senior Johnson ally Michael Gove told Sky News on Sunday that much of the work has already been done on the new deal and "there are areas where the European Union's interests and the United Kingdom's interests are already closely aligned, so I am confident that we will be able not just to leave the EU on Jan. 31 but also to conclude all the details of a new relationship in short order."

Yet procedures in Britain's centuries-old Parliament will stand in the way of instant gratification for Brexiteers.

The first order of business when the new lawmakers take

their seats Tuesday on the green leather-clad wooden benches of the House of Commons' debating chamber is electing a Speaker. That position was elevated to global fame by former Speaker John Bercow and his theatrical cries of "Or-derrr" before he stepped down and was replaced in November by Lindsay Hoyle.

Next, all 650 legislators have to be sworn in, a process expected to take days.

On Thursday, Queen Elizabeth II will deliver a speech written by Johnson's government, laying out the administration's policy plans.

Gove said, after Brexit, the new Conservative government's first priority will be

pumping billions into Britain's ailing national health system.

"We need to make sure that the National Health Service is properly funded and we will be bringing forward legislation to ensure that there is an NHS funding guarantee, that's the first and most important thing," Gove told Sky News.

While the Conservatives are forging ahead with their policy platform, the defeated opposition Labour Party was licking its wounds and preparing to find a successor to leader Jeremy Corbyn, who has said he will relinquish the party leadership early next year.

Corbyn apologized Sunday for this party's crushing defeat in the British general election

but defended his campaign, even though it failed to resonate with the party's working-class base, as "one of hope rather than fear."

Disappointment as marathon climate talks end with slim deal

MADRID (AP)—Marathon U.N. climate talks ended Sunday with a slim compromise that sparked widespread disappointment, after major polluters resisted calls for ramping up efforts to keep global warming at bay and negotiators postponed debate about rules for international carbon markets for another year.

Organizers kept delegates from almost 200 nations in Madrid far beyond Friday's scheduled close of the two-week talks. In the end, negotiators endorsed a general call for greater efforts to tackle climate change and several measures to help poor countries respond and adapt to its impacts.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said he was "disappointed" by the meeting's outcome.

"The international community lost an important opportunity to show increased ambition on mitigation, adaptation and finance to tackle the climate crisis," he said. "We must not give up and I will not give up."

The final declaration cited an "urgent need" to cut planet-heating greenhouse gases in line with the goals of the

UK election

Results from 650 of the 650 constituencies

Conservatives

365

Labour

203

Scottish Nationalists

48

Liberal Democrats

11

Democratic Unionists

8

Other

15

326
seats
needed
to win

Source: BBC
Graphic: Staff, TNS

"I'm sorry that we came up short and I take my responsibility for it," Corbyn wrote in a letter published in the left-leaning Sunday Mirror newspaper.

But he also insisted that his party's ambitious, big-spending policy platform was popular and blamed the British media for its portrayal of Labour. Corbyn was widely criticized for his perceived tolerance of anti-Semitism in his inner circle.

Patients rally in Ecuador for legal use of medical cannabis

QUITO, Ecuador (AP)—Unrelenting pain in her hips and weeks of insomnia left Nelly Valbuena desperate for relief from her metastatic breast cancer.

The university professor found freedom from her disease's cruel side effects in an unexpected remedy: CBD, a compound extracted from the cannabis plant.

Now Valbuena is pushing Ecuador's government to put into effect recently passed legislation permitting medicinal use of cannabis products so others like her suffering from agonizing illnesses can have new options for pain relief.

"I desperately needed something to help," she said. "Only someone living in pain and unable to sleep could know what that means."

Ecuador's legislature approved medical use of cannabis containing less than 1% of THC, the high-producing ingredient in marijuana, in September. President Lenín Moreno was given a month to veto but did not. Now Ecuadorians are waiting for the new norm to be published in the official register.

When the law is officially put on the books, Ecuador will be the latest in a tide of Latin American countries approving some form of medicinal cannabis use. Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay have all signed off on permitting therapeutic usage, giving rise to a new industry now growing at a rapid rate and with expanding opportunities.

"In Latin America, with

a population of 625 million people, there is great potential," said Álvaro Torres, a Colombian businessman who co-founded Khiron Life Sciences Corp., which produces and distributes medical cannabis.

Valbuena's fight against cancer began in 2012 and within four years it had spread to other organs, making her daily life a battle with pain.

Morphine patches provided temporary relief but were soon no longer covered by insurance and purchasing them was prohibitively expensive. The patches also had uncomfortable side effects, like vomiting, nausea and headaches.

Valbuena read about cannabis and put a plea on Facebook for help. Within a day, a doctor responded, offering her an oral CBD spray.

"I fell asleep for 16 hours," she remembered. "It was a huge relief."

Valbuena isn't the only one benefiting from medical cannabis in her household. So does Tahis Ponce, her husband's 18-year-old daughter, who has severe cerebral palsy. The couple says CBD helps calm her laughing fits, anxiety and insomnia.

Valbuena and her husband have embarked on a media campaign to chip away at cannabis' stigma in the socially conservative country.

CBD is often derived from hemp plants, which look a lot like another type of cannabis, marijuana, but contain only trace amounts of THC. The U.S. government removed industrial hemp from its list of illegal drugs last year.

landmark 2015 Paris climate change accord. But it fell far short of explicitly demanding that countries submit bolder emissions proposals next year, which developing countries and environmentalists had demanded.

The Paris accord established a common goal of keeping temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit), ideally 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century. So far, the world is on course for a 3- to 4-degree Celsius rise, with potentially dramatic consequences for many countries, including rising sea levels and fiercer storms.

After two nights of fractious negotiations, delegates in Madrid decided to defer some of the thorniest issues to the next U.N. climate summit in Glasgow in November.

Chile's Environment Minister Carolina Schmidt, who chaired the meeting, said she was "sad" no deal had been reached on the rules for international trading in carbon emissions permits.

Focus

AP Exclusive: Troops that defied Maduro have fled Venezuela

By JOSHUA GOODMAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MIAMI (AP)—For seven nerve-racking months, they slept through the day in cramped quarters on cold floors, while spending their nights in prayer, keeping fit with dumbbells made from water jugs and peering through the diplomatic compound's curtains for fear of surveillance.

But on Monday, 16 national guardsmen who shocked Venezuela and the world alike by revolting on April 30 against President Nicolás Maduro were safely out of the country, having successfully fled the Panamanian embassy in Caracas that had been their makeshift home.

The Associated Press spoke exclusively to the group's leaders, who provided the first detailed account of what led them to plot with Maduro's opponents in an uprising that laid bare fraying support for the socialist leader within the armed forces.

Due to security concerns, lieutenant colonels Illich Sánchez and Rafael Soto wouldn't reveal their location, or say exactly when or how they left Venezuela. They only said they journeyed in small groups as part of a clandestine "military operation" that counted with the support of dozens of low-ranking troops and their commanders.

"We want to clarify to all of the Venezuelan people that the decision taken April 30 was in fulfillment of the constitution, the republic's laws and our democratic institutions," Sánchez said in a handwritten missive sent to the AP confirming that he and the other 16 troops had all safely left the country.

The previously untold story of how Sánchez and Soto managed to dupe their superiors and plot a revolt against Maduro underscores how discontent—and fear—has been running high inside Venezuela's barracks even as the embattled leader clings to power amid punishing U.S. sanctions imposed after a presidential election last year many say was fraudulent.

In their telling, the two longtime friends grew disillusioned watching the devastating collapse of Venezuela's economy and started secretly plotting to remove Maduro. Eventually they teamed up with Maduro's opponents led by National Assembly President Juan Guaidó, who is recognized as Venezuela's rightful leader by the U.S. and some 60 countries.

On April 30, they stunned



In this Nov. 8, 2019 photo, Venezuelan guardsmen exercise inside Panama's Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela. The group of 16 Venezuela troops holed up for seven months at the foreign embassy after revolting against President Nicolas Maduro said they have managed to flee the country.

Venezuelans by appearing before dawn with tanks and heavily armed troops on a bridge in eastern Caracas alongside Guaidó and activist Leopoldo López, who they helped spring from what they considered an illegal house arrest.

"When I gathered my troops at 2 a.m. and told them we were going to liberate Venezuela they broke down in tears," said Sánchez, who in a photo taken on Monday was still wearing the same Under Armour hoodie he used to sneak into the Panamanian embassy. "Nobody saw it coming, but they were all immediately committed."

Adds Soto: "Everything was perfectly lined up for a peaceful transition."

In hindsight the two stand-out officers seemed fated for the high-risk mission, having both risen through the ranks to a trusted position with direct control of troops and regular contact with Maduro's top aides and Cabinet members.

Sánchez, 41, commanded a garrison of some 500 guardsmen responsible for protecting downtown government buildings including the presidential palace, supreme court and—most importantly—the opposition-controlled congress.

That unique position gave him cover to win the trust of opposition lawmakers, even if on tumultuous days he had to do things such as forcibly remove activists who chained themselves to the legislature.

"The only military officer authorized in Venezuela to talk to the opposition was me,"

said Sánchez. "But in a polarized country, where things are either black or white, I couldn't risk taking a political position openly."

Soto, 43, for a time was assigned to the feared SEBIN intelligence police, leading a team of some 150 agents charged with spying on government opponents. That training gave him the assurances he needed to know how to safely communicate with fellow plotters.

In what he considers an "act of destiny," he met López in 2018 when he was sent to his home—where the opposition leader had been transferred to finish a 14-year sentence for inciting violence—to look for a cellphone with an American chip that he had been using to communicate clandestinely.

But instead of conducting a sweep, he spent an hour talking to Venezuela's top political prisoner, exchanging views about the country's situation and even snapping a photo of the two together for his wife, an admirer.

"That's where I planted a seed," said Soto. "I managed to convince him that not all of the military was with the revolution."

Echoing claims by the Trump administration, the two men said they were defrauded by Maduro aides, including Supreme Court President Maikel Moreno and Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino, who they say ditched at the last minute a promise made to the opposition to abandon their support for Maduro. Both Moreno and Padrino have re-

peatedly asserted their loyalty to Maduro.

In the confusing aftermath of the failed rebellion, they scurried for protection on the back of motorcycles, stripping off their olive green fatigues and knocking, unsuccessfully at first, on several embassy doors.

Amid the chaos, López phoned then Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela, who immediately embraced their cause and worked through the night personally guaranteeing their safe arrival to the embassy.

Varela in an interview recalled how two months before the U.S. invasion of Panama, in 1989, then-dictator Gen. Manuel Noriega crushed a similar revolt and then ordered the execution of more than 10 ringleaders.

"We couldn't leave them alone," Varela, who left office in July, told the AP. "The Sebin was 10 feet from the door. They were going to kill them all."

Venezuela's government has yet to comment but shortly after the failed putsch Maduro accused the men of belonging to a small pocket of "traitors" who had been hoodwinked by "far right coup mongers" backed by the U.S. Several other alleged conspirators were jailed and one naval captain accused of seeking to assassinate Maduro died in state custody with what his lawyer said were signs of torture.

Underscoring the risks associated with guardsmen's flight, regional military commanders in recent days were instructed to be on high alert for the men, who

they identified by photos and ID.

"Remember, they are armed and are looking to sow chaos," reads the message, a copy of which was provided by Sánchez.

The embassy, in an upscale high-rise, would become their spartan, heavily surveilled home for the next seven months. Both men said the "humanitarian support" provided by the embassy's staff and the Panamanian people ensured their safety.

While confined, the 16 guardsmen worked hard to maintain military discipline.

To keep out of their host's way, they adopted an inverted sleep schedule, dozing during the day on thin mattresses strewn across the floor of a small room. Then at night, after the diplomats went home, they'd stumble out of bed to cook together on a small stove top, keep fit with dumbbells improvised from 20-liter water bottles and read religious texts in a prayer circle. Sánchez compared it to Anne Frank's cloistered hideaway from the Nazis in a secret attic.

Soto and Sánchez cemented their friendship as young cadets, before Hugo Chávez had come to power and upended Venezuela's armed forces, purging anyone suspected of disloyalty. They said their loyalty was always to the institution they served, not Chavez's revolution, and managed to win the trust of top officials by demonstrating a high level of professionalism.

They secretly turned against Chavez's revolution in 2007, after the leftist firebrand tried to

change Venezuela's constitution to abolish presidential term limits. But at the time they lacked the ability to push for change.

"I didn't want to stake a radical position and become another martyr," said Sánchez. "I had to wait for my moment."

The brutal 2018 killing of renegade police officer Oscar Pérez in a military raid on his hideout magnified the dangers they faced but also stiffened their resolve. When Guaidó declared himself interim president with the backing of the U.S. in January, the two entered headlong into a compartmentalized conspiracy with members of the opposition.

Around the same time, Soto was arrested as part of a roundup of suspected plotters inside the national guard. But after a harrowing week in the dungeons of military counter-intelligence, in which he said his head was covered and he was under a constant threat of torture, his one-time boss, SEBIN director Gen. Gustavo Gonzalez López, personally came to pull him out of jail.

"He only half believed in my innocence," said Soto. "But it wasn't convenient for him that someone who he completely trusted was there, because he could've been singled out next."

The two men's admiration for López runs deep despite misgivings within the opposition itself about the wisdom and planning that went into the surprise uprising, much of it unknown to all but a small circle. In the run-up to the uprising, the two even managed to get past the security detail stationed outside López's home and discuss plans face-to-face.

"We spoke easily because I knew exactly what the government was monitoring, and what we could and couldn't say," said Soto about the tense, adrenaline-filled two weeks prior to the uprising.

After the uprising, López—from the Spanish ambassador's residence, where he took refuge—took care of their everyday needs to make sure morale stayed high during the long ordeal. Every Saturday they cooked hamburgers donated by opposition well-wishers.

Now, in exile, their plans are uncertain but finally they will be reunited with their families, who were granted asylum in Panama after fleeing themselves when the uprising failed.

"We left Venezuela," said Sánchez from an undisclosed location, "but our fight to restore Venezuela's democracy will continue."

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW:

2020 Hyundai Kona Ultimate:

Its spirit trumps economy

By BARRY SPYKER
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

The Hyundai Kona enters its third year for 2020 and it's flush with the usual attributes: low-end pricing, good fuel economy and Hyundai's popular 10-year powertrain warranty.

But, practicality aside, the Kona—especially the top-line Ultimate—is equally about personality, a spirited turbocharged ride, cool color schemes and surprisingly upscale features like a wireless phone charger and head-up display—both normally found in pricier crossovers.

The new Kona gets some modest changes, like adaptive cruise control in the Ultimate and some higher-end features available on lower trim levels. A new color, Sunset Orange, has been introduced and automatic emergency braking now is standard. An electric Kona also is now available.

The Kona looks strange enough to turn heads, with

its narrow row of LED lights resembling eyebrows over the fenders. Headlights are clad in gray vinyl and fog lights are set low on the bumper.

It looks ready for fun and that begins when you hit the gas pedal. The Ultimate is equipped with a 1.6-liter turbocharged inline 4-cylinder engine capable of 175 horsepower. But it's the high torque available at low speeds that makes it feel brisker than many in its class. It gets 195 pound-feet of torque at 1,500 to 4,500 rpm.

Paired to a 7-speed twin-clutch transmission, the Kona gets to 60 mph in 6.8 seconds. That's not blazing fast but it is arguably best in the subcompact class. Available in front-wheel or all-wheel-drive, it also has good road manners with reasonably little lean on corners and curves. The ride is unusually smooth with a multilink suspension absorbing most of the road bumps.

It delivers all this while go-



The 2020 Hyundai Kona. (HYUNDAI).

TNS

ing easy on the drink: 32 mpg highway, 28 city for the front-wheel-drive and 26-29 for the optional all-wheel power.

The cabin offers decent comfort for five and it's pretty classy looking for this segment, too. Seats are trimmed in leather, heated in front, and offer 8-way power adjustments for the driver. Rear seats are not as roomy for taller folks with 7 inches less legroom—better phone in your “shotgun.”

The cargo area is among

the smaller in the segment, too, with 19 cubic feet behind the seats and only 45.8 with the rear seats (60-40 split) folded down. There is some hidden storage under the cargo floor, though.

Some upscale features are startling for an economy car. A wireless charging pad, seldom found in this class, eliminates wires getting caught in console lids. And a head-up display with driver data is another unexpected treat. It

also has rain-sensing wipers, heated side mirrors with turn signals, power sunroof and tilt and telescoping wheel.

An 8-inch touchscreen hosts the infotainment and is one of the easier to learn. It responds quickly to inputs and comes with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity. Tunes are heard via an 8-speaker Infinity sound system.

Impressive tech continues in Hyundai's expanded safety package, including automatic

emergency braking, lane-keep assist and a driver-drowsiness monitor. Ultimate trim adds adaptive cruise control with pedestrian detection and parking sensors.

If the best cargo space is essential to your needs, better to shop around. Otherwise, the fun and feature-laden Kona Ultimate is a good one to keep on your subcompact shopping list. When neighbors drop by, there'll be lots more to talk about than mileage.

By MARCIA HEROUX POUNDS
SUN SENTINEL

Holiday bells are ringing, and many consumers are sprinting to snag a year-end bargain on a new car or truck. Is that the smart move?

Experts say “yes,” and that the deals are a bit better this December than a year ago. One difference: There are still 2019 cars and trucks on the lots that dealerships are motivated to sell at a discount.

“This is the time of year you'll find your better deal,” said Matthew DeLorenzo, senior managing editor for Kelley Blue Book, which provides vehicle ratings, reviews and prices to consumers. He said dealers are looking to boost year-end sales numbers.

Ronald Montoya, senior consumer advice editor for Edmunds auto rating service, says December is when there are the highest discounts off the manufacturers' suggested retail price—6.1% on average—and the best incentives. In January, there are usually smaller discounts, as dealers tend to start the year conservatively, he said.

A 2019 versus 2020 model

“Most of the deals going are

on the outgoing models,” Montoya said. He recommends looking at both 2019 and 2020 models. “It may not always be that the 2019 is the best price. It's worth looking at both of them,” he said.

Here are some of the best year-end incentives to purchase or lease a new vehicle, according to AutoNation, the country's largest auto retailer, based in Fort Lauderdale; and Southeast Toyota, part of JM Family Enterprises in Deerfield Beach:

2019 Ram 1500 Big Horn Crew Cab pickup truck is on sale for up to \$15,000 off the sticker price, or the truck can be leased for \$199 a month plus tax.

A 2019 Nissan Altima or Rogue is \$6,000 to \$8,000 off the sticker price. And the 2019 Nissan Murano is up to \$10,000 off the sticker price.

A 2019 Honda Civic LX Sedan CVT can be leased for \$159 a month, plus taxes, for 36 months.

Toyota is offering a \$500 holiday cash bonus on the purchase of eight models of the Corolla, Camry, RAV4, Highlander, Tacoma and Tundra; and \$500 holiday bonus for leasing nine

models of the Corolla, Camry, RAV4, Tacoma and Tundra. Also, 0% financing is available for 13 models including the Corolla, Prius, Camry, Avalon, C-HR, 4Runner, Tacoma, Tundra and Sequoia.

Manufacturers' incentives might include bonus cash, which should go directly to the consumer, and dealer cash, which is not advertised.

Dealers “don't have to pass that on. It's their choice,” Montoya said. But to get you to buy now, a dealer may dangle that extra incentive.

Sticker shock

Vehicle prices have been rising, with the average transaction for a light vehicle above \$37,000, up nearly 4% in 2019, according to Kelley Blue Book. Expensive SUV and CUVs, or crossover utility vehicles, are driving up the average purchase.

“Cars have been getting more expensive because there's more technology on board,” DeLorenzo said. There are also new safety, comfort and entertainment features on the latest vehicle models, AutoNation points out.

But sales have been slower in 2019 than in 2018, so deals are “a little better,” he said.

Consumers are likely to find special offers on trucks, SUVs and crossover utility vehicles, which combine the smoother platform of a car with the body of an SUV.

Consumers are less likely to find incentives on sedans and minivans, he said. “Sedans are selling slowly so you would think there would be a lot of incentives on them. But manufacturers are pulling out [of the sedan market],” he said. Those who want sedans might find more lease deals, he added.

“Minivans had a drop in sales and there are slimmer incentives,” DeLorenzo said. There's less motivation for manufacturers to offer incentives because “people who want those vehicles really need them,” he said.

Experts advise to shop for a vehicle before the holidays so you can do your homework, visit dealerships, and check online sites for available models and prices.

Montoya said shop sooner, during the holiday season,

than later. “Later, the discounts might be better but you may not have much to choose from,” he said.

And decide whether you're flexible on the color of your new car, and if not, if you're willing to pay a bit more, he said.

DeLorenzo said consumers are often asked by online car-shopping sites to enter their zip code. While consumers may be hesitant to do so, for privacy reasons, that's often how to find a regional offer for a car or truck.

Best financing

Once you have chosen a specific car or truck model, consider the financing deals being offered. Some loan companies offer 0% financing or cash back. If you can secure your own low financing through a credit union or bank, then you can take advantage of the cash back.

“The lower the payment, you have to look more closely at the terms. There could be a big upfront payment,” DeLorenzo said.

Kelley Blue Book recommends consumers only lease a car when they're not plan-

ning to drive a lot of miles in a year. Offers are often tied to financing through a certain company, and leases may have mileage limitations.

The Ram 1500 lease offer is contingent on the buyer's “above average credit” and must be financed through Chrysler Capital Tier 1, for example.

The Honda CRV lease deal cited by AutoNation, for example, has a limitation of 10,000 miles a year. Over that, leasing will cost you 20 cents a mile.

Consider taking the cash back on a “low financing or cash back” offer, if you can secure your own low financing through a credit union or bank.

If you buy

Here are the top rated cars of 2020, based on performance, comfort, technology, fuel economy and value, according to Edmunds:

- Sedan: Honda Accord
- Luxury Sedan: Mercedes A-Class
- Electric Vehicle: Tesla Model 3
- SUV: Kia Telluride
- Luxury SUV: Mercedes GLE
- Sports Car: Chevrolet Corvette
- Truck: Ram 1500

Life & Style

Weinstein's bail hiked over allegations he disabled monitor

By **MICHAEL R. SISAK**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A judge Wednesday hiked Harvey Weinstein's bail over allegations he mishandled or disabled his electronic ankle monitor dozens of times in recent months.

Judge James Burke gave Weinstein three options to cover a new bail of up to \$5 million and warned the disgraced movie mogul that he'll face jail if other issues crop up.

Weinstein, who had been free on \$1 million bail, agreed to meet the obligation by putting up \$2 million in cash and other assets through a bail bondsman.

Weinstein, 67, leaned on a walker as he came and went from a New York City courthouse for a hearing on prosecutors contention that he had tinkered with the monitoring device.

He looked frail and pained,

as he did at a court appearance last week.

Weinstein's lawyer said he is scheduled for back surgery Thursday to relieve pain from an August car crash and that he will recover in time for the Jan. 6 start of his trial on rape and sexual assault charges.

Burke cautioned Weinstein against any last-minute surprises as the trial draws near.

"If you have any further medical issues, the court will not be terribly understanding," Burke said.

Weinstein indicated the surgery and new bail arrangement would guarantee he appears at his trial.

"This ensures I am here Jan. 6," Weinstein said. "This is a good thing for you."

Weinstein has pleaded not guilty to charges he raped a woman in a Manhattan hotel room in 2013 and performed a

forcible sex act on a different woman in 2006.

He maintains that any sexual activity was consensual.

Weinstein's lawyer, Donna Rotunno, said he is "looking forward" to the trial. She said they plan an aggressive defense, but said vigorous cross-examination shouldn't be viewed as victim shaming.

"Just because someone makes a claim doesn't make it true," Rotunno said.

Burke offered Weinstein three bail options because of reforms to New York's bail system that are set to take effect on Jan. 1.

Other than using a bail bondsman or paying \$5 million cash, Weinstein could have used collateral to secure 10%—or \$5 million—of a \$50 million bond with collateral.

Weinstein bail bondsman Ira Judelson's clients have

included mixed martial arts fighter Conor McGregor and former International Monetary Fund honcho Dominique Strauss-Kahn.

One of Judelson's associates outside the courthouse wore a sweatshirt with the slogan, "Got Bail?"

Prosecutor Joan Illuzzi first raised Weinstein's alleged bail violations at a hearing last Friday. She said that he'd left his whereabouts unrecorded for hours at a time by repeatedly, purposely leaving at home a piece of the monitoring technology that keeps the ankle bracelet activated.

Illuzzi said Wednesday there were 57 violations in less than two months.

Rotunno has denied it was anything deliberate, blaming "technical glitches" like dead batteries. She said the issues had nothing to do with manipulation of the bracelet, though she acknowledged that on at least one occasion, he'd forgot-

ten part of the device at home.

But on Wednesday, Illuzzi told the court that the person monitoring Weinstein does not believe the problems were due to technical glitches, but rather intentional acts by Weinstein because he "didn't want anyone to know where he was."

In recent months, Weinstein has been spotted hobnobbing at Manhattan nightclubs and getting jeered at a recent actors showcase.

While the monitoring now appears to be working, Illuzzi said she thought that was because of the threat of new bail.

"I don't think it was the adding of the extra batteries," Illuzzi said. "It was Mr. Weinstein's panic that the court might change the bail."

After the hearing, Rotunno countered Illuzzi's assertion.

"There were no violations. These were technical issues related to a battery," she said. "Ms. Illuzzi makes mountains out of mole hills."

Standing ovation in Milan for Domingo's 50th anniversary

By **COLLEEN BARRY**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MILAN (AP)—Opera star Plácido Domingo received a standing ovation for his 50th anniversary gala concert at La Scala on Sunday and returned the appreciation with a rare a cappella performance.

Standing alone on the stage holding three yellow roses, Domingo serenaded the audience with a favorite Spanish zarzuela, "Non Puede Ser." By then, after more than half an hour of applause and a standing ovation rare for the storied Milan opera house, Domingo and his co-stars for



Domingo

the evening, the choir and orchestra had already performed two encores. He alone emerged for the third.

Domingo, 78, appeared overwhelmed by the reception, and at one point kissed the stage where he performed for the first time on Dec. 7, 1969, in the title role of Verdi's "Ernani." In all, he has sung 135 times on the La Scala stage, in 22 operas.

The La Scala anniversary fell during a year that has seen U.S. opera houses cancel Domingo's scheduled appearances, following reports by The Associated Press that more than 20 women had accused the star of sexual harassment or inappropriate sexually charged behavior.

Domingo has denied the allegations, and after a period of silence, only recently has begun giving interviews to select publications ahead of European appearances. In the interviews he claimed he always behaved like a gentleman and said he never abused his power. He also has said he intends to continue performing at least through his planned engagements running through 2021.

While in the United States all of his published dates were canceled, the singer has received overwhelming support from Europe's opera houses—which have all maintained his dates—and fans alike.

Many at Sunday's performance focused on the quality of his voice, its unique timber, while weighing the art against the impossibility for outsiders to know what happened between Domingo and his accusers.

Reese Witherspoon honored at Women in Entertainment gala

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Reese Witherspoon remembered when she met with several film production studios in 2011 to ask them how many movies were being developed for women.

The studios' responses nearly floored her.

"Of all the major seven studios, the answer was one," Witherspoon said after she received the prestigious Sherry Lansing Leadership Award at The Hollywood Reporter's Women in Entertainment breakfast gala Wednesday in Los Angeles. The Oscar and Emmy-winning actress was handed the award by her friend actress Kerry Washington for excelling in film and her philanthropic efforts.

Witherspoon said she was grateful to receive the award named after Lansing, the former Paramount Pictures CEO who was the first woman to head a Hollywood studio. While she called Lansing a "trailblazer," the actress hearkened back to her meeting with studios that felt "grim."

"One movie was being made with a female lead out of 140 movies," she continued. "As I was told by a studio head at the time, 'Well, we already have one female star this year. We can't make two.' Can you guess which year this was? 2011. Not 1911. ... 2011."

Witherspoon said the moment helped empower her to start her own production company, Hello Sunshine, which has produced Oscar-nominated films "Gone Girl," "Wild,"



Reese Witherspoon, left, and Eva Longoria arrive at The Hollywood Reporter's Women in Entertainment Breakfast Gala on Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2019, in Los Angeles.

and the HBO drama series "Big Little Lies" with an all-female leading cast.

The actress, who starred in films including "Legally Blonde" and "Sweet Home Alabama," told the packed room of about 600 people, mostly women, that "this is our time."

The star-studded event included Charlize Theron, John Legend and Mindy Kaling. It also had about 40 young women who are taking part in THR's Women in Entertainment mentorship program, established a decade ago.

"A lot of people can recognize a problem, look at it and complain about it," said Witherspoon, who is also a member of the Time's Up movement, an initiative for anti-harassment and gender equality. "But not everybody is going to do something about it. Leaders are really doers. Even though you don't think of yourself as a leader, or you're hesitant or you're hypnotized by words saying 'You can't.' Too bad. Do it anyway."

Around \$1.5 million in university scholarships were presented to high school seniors from under-served communities in south and east Los Angeles. All of the seniors have taken part in the program.

Often shedding tears onstage, Theron said the gala "fed my soul."

Actress Olivia Wilde, a guest editor of THR's Women in Entertainment issue that was released Wednesday, said women should explore their feminine strength.

Ryan Reynolds says he related to Peloton actress' plight

By JOHN CARUCCI
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK (AP)—Ryan Reynolds says he relates to the social media criticism heaped on the Peloton ad actress. In fact, that feeling led him to hire her for a commercial promoting his gin company.

Reynolds spoke Tuesday about the uproar while promoting his new action flick, the Michael Bay-directed “6 Underground.”

In the Peloton commercial, Monica Ruiz portrays a wife who receives an exercise bike as a Christmas present, and chronicles her yearlong journey to get in shape. The commercial ends with the wife thanking her husband for the gift. After the spot aired, the character was mocked for several reasons: Some noted she was already thin, others mocked her for having a “nervous” expression, and others were angry her husband gave her an exercise gift, as if she needed to lose weight.

Reynolds thought the viral negativity was unfair, and said it’s “a situation that I’ve been in many times before” as an actor.

“You put it out there, and it doesn’t quite work, and you feel a little alienated and stuff. So, I had tremendous empathy for her in that moment,” Reynolds said at the premiere of his new action flick, “6 Underground.”

“Doing the Aviation Gin ad sort of gave her some authorship over some of this conversation, which I

loved,” he said. “And she’s, she’s the best. She’s really funny, really smart.”

In “6 Underground,” which premieres Friday on Netflix, Reynolds stars as the leader of a group of six warriors, each with their own special set of skills. After faking their own deaths, they take on a number for their names, ranging from One to Six, and go underground to take down a dictator. Reynolds plays One.



Reynolds

The movie also stars French actress Melanie Laurent, Manuel Garcia-Rulfo, Ben Hardy, Adria Arjona, Dave Franco and Israeli actor Lior Raz.

It was directed by Michael Bay, who is known for the big-screen action movies like “Armageddon,” “The Rock,” and “The Transformers” series. But he says it worked for him to pair with Netflix.

“Here’s the thing I love big cinema. But Netflix is a new voice. It is a big, it’s a big name out here right now. And it’s doing a lot of interesting content. And it gives it—it’s all over the world, you know, access to almost 250 million people,” Bay said.

He also says the studios wouldn’t back the \$150 million dollar action thriller because of its R-rating.

“Our price-point was a little high for an R-rated movie. And studios were just like, ‘We love it. But it’s a little too expensive,’ because they have a certain price-point and an R-rated movie. And Netflix says, ‘we’ll do it.’ They didn’t shy away from it,” Bay said.

Raphael show with famous Madonna paintings opens in Berlin



Media covers an exhibition of Madonna paintings by Renaissance artist Raphael at the Gemaeldegalerie in Berlin, Wednesday, Germany, Dec. 11, 2019.

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BERLIN (AP)—Berlin is opening the first of three Raphael exhibitions this week as the art world celebrates the 500th anniversary of the Renaissance master’s death next year.

Five paintings of the Virgin Mary and her son that are usually not exhibited in the same space are all on display in one room at the city’s Gemaeldegalerie museum. In addition, Raphael’s famous “The Madonna of the Pinks” will be on loan from the National Gallery in London for the exhibi-

tion called “Raphael in Berlin. The Madonnas of the Gemaeldegalerie.”

The six paintings belong to Raphael’s early works from the beginning of the 16th century and depict Madonna and her child in different variations. One shows Jesus on his mother’s lap with pink flowers in his hands, another with a goldfinch on his leg. On most of the paintings Mary has a solemn look, as if she already knew about her son’s fate.

The exhibition’s centerpiece is a tondo, or round painting, called “Terranuova Madonna” from about 1505

that Raphael created shortly after his arrival in Florence. It shows Madonna with her child, surrounded by the infant St. John and an unknown child with a halo.

“The big Raphael year 2020 is already starting in Berlin in December 2019,” the director of the Gemaeldegalerie, Michael Eissenhauer, told reporters on Wednesday. “The show gives a precise view on Raphael before he became the star artist at the Vatican.”

Raphael was born in 1483 in Urbino and died at the age of 37 in Rome. Together with Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, he is one of the most

famous Italian artists of the Renaissance period.

The presentation takes a historical look at the collection of the Berlin museums, showing works by the “young Raphael” that were widely popular when the first museum was founded in the city in 1830.

The exhibition also sheds light on the early acquisition policies of the Gemaeldegalerie in the broader context of the history of art collecting in Europe and it shows the image that 19th-century Germany had of Raphael.

The exhibition opens to the public Friday and runs through April 26.

‘Jumanji’ ends ‘Frozen 2’ hot streak to claim top spot

LOS ANGELES (AP)—“Jumanji: The Next Level” puts “Frozen 2” on second-place ice, while Clint Eastwood’s “Richard Jewell” opened with one of the worst box office debuts for the director.

The Sony film starring Dwayne Johnson and Kevin Hart brought in \$60.1 million in the U.S. and Canada to break a three-day record for a comedy in December for the production company. The sequel is a followup to 2017’s “Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle,” which grossed \$962 million worldwide.

A week before it opened in North America, Sony’s “Jumanji: The Next Level” debuted in 18 international countries where it made \$52.5 million. The film was Hart’s first movie release since the

actor-comedian suffered a serious back injury after his vintage muscle car he was riding in crashed in California in September.

“People were like ‘Another reboot’ of a well-known franchise, but the movie delivered so well on the promise of the marketing, and the whole concept of the movie just resonated with audiences,” said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for the box office tracker Comscore. “It’s going to play well in the long haul.”

“Frozen 2” dropped to second place with \$19.2 million domestically after claiming top box office spot for three straight weeks, earning \$367 million since its Nov. 22 release. The animated film following the adventures of Anna and Elsa crossed the \$1 billion mark globally to become

Disney Animation’s third billion-dollar project along with “Frozen” and “Zootopia.” It also became Walt Disney Studio’s sixth billion-dollar release in 2019.

“Richard Jewell” landed at No. 4, bringing in \$5 million. The film took aim at the media and federal investigators for what he sees as a rush to judgment after the 1996 Olympics bombing in Atlanta.

The 89-year-old Eastwood calls Jewell’s story “a great American tragedy.” The docudrama focuses on Jewell, who was initially hailed as a hero for finding a bomb at the event held at Centennial Olympic Park and clearing bystanders from the area.

One person was killed and 111 were injured when the bomb exploded.

Jewell likely helped prevent

many more casualties, but within a few days was reported to be the focus of the FBI investigation, and the public quickly turned on him. He was cleared three months later after his life had been upended by the investigation and public scrutiny.

The film fell under immense scrutiny from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution which objected to the movie’s portrayal of the late journalist Kathy Scruggs, who seemingly sleeps with an FBI agent.

Olivia Wilde, who plays Scruggs, posted a series of tweets on Thursday that she does not believe the real-life journalist “traded sex for tips” despite the insinuation in the movie.

Despite the low numbers, Dergarabedian believes “Richard Jewell” could build

a larger audience over time.

“If history tells us anything, movies like this generally are a slow burn at this time of the year,” he said. “But also, let’s think about this too. Because it’s Clint Eastwood, there’s always a certain level of expectation placed on any movie. Often those expectations are overblown a bit. Given the subject matter, it’s aimed at a mature audience. I don’t know if you could expect like ‘Richard Jewell’ to open \$20-\$30 million. It’s what you should expect from an adult drama.”

Eastwood’s drug smuggling drama “The Mule” debuted with more than \$17.2 million late last year.

Along with “Richard Jewell,” Paramount’s “Black Christmas” put up sub-par debut numbers to open at No. 5. The 1974 slasher film remake

from Universal pulled in only \$4.42 million.

“It’s a very crowded marketplace right now,” Dergarabedian said. “Obviously, ‘Jumanji’ had so much broad-based appeal that it cut into everybody’s audiences.”

The Rian Johnson-directed “Knives Out” continues to lean on strong social media buzz to land at No. 3, bringing in \$9.2 million. The well-reviewed, innovative whodunit film starring Daniel Craig, Jamie Lee Curtis and Chris Evans has earned back its budget last week, and now has grossed \$78 million.

Next weekend, the box office is expected to be significantly busier with the release of “Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker,” “Cats” and the expanded release of “Bombshell,” starring Charlize Theron, Nicole Kidman and Margot Robbie.

Kim Kardashian West sues doctor over 'Vampire Facial'

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP)—Reality TV star and businesswoman Kim Kardashian West is suing an Alabama doctor over claims he wrongly used her image to promote a medical procedure called a "Vampire Facial."

West filed suit Tuesday in Los Angeles against Dr. Charles Runels of coastal Fairhope, Alabama. The suit claims Runels misused West's image in promotional materials after she posted a photo of herself on social media showing the results of

a "Vampire Facial."

West, a reality TV star and successful businesswoman who has a number of beauty and lifestyle enterprises and millions of followers on social media, asked a federal judge to bar Runels from using her name or photo and to make him and any other doctors who benefited pay her profits.

Runels, 59, said in a telephone interview Wednesday that West wrongly used his trademarked name for a medical procedure to promote herself. He called the lawsuit

"disappointing."

"We're trying to do good medicine. The last thing we want to do is spend millions of dollars arguing with a celebrity," he said.

The cosmetic procedure involves drawing a patient's blood, spinning it in a centrifuge and then injecting small amounts under the skin using multiple, small needles, Runels' website says, and blood also is applied topically on the skin.

Runels, who said he developed the procedure and got a

trademark for the "Vampire" name, said about 2,300 physicians in 50 countries are licensed to perform the procedure. West underwent the procedure from an associated doctor in Miami in 2013 before posting a photo of herself online with blood on her

face, he said.

The lawsuit, which seeks an unspecified amount of money, contends Runels wrongly used her photo and name to promote his business. Runels said he didn't ask the celebrity for the social media post, which he said she used to draw more

attention to herself.

"I've already taken all the stuff off my website, but I'm not going to let her call me a thief. First she works to let everyone in the world know she had a Vampire Facial and now she doesn't want anyone to talk about it," Runels said.

A\$AP Rocky performs in Stockholm months after conviction

STOCKHOLM (AP)—A\$AP Rocky is back in Sweden. The American rapper performed Wednesday evening, four months after he was convicted of assault for a violent street brawl.

The curtain raised at Stockholm's Ericsson Globe arena to the sight of a stage-wide metal cage enclosing male dancers. They attempted to break free as soon as the rapper began to perform, a not-so-subtle reference to his nearly month-long incarceration this summer pending his trial.

But A\$AP Rocky, whose real name is Rakim Mayers, said he wasn't there to talk about his treatment in the hands of the Swedish authorities but to "spread love and have fun."

However, the show was peppered with references to his time in a Swedish prison, including a simulated arrest and joking he felt like "an honoree Swede as this point."

Following a visit to a school in the suburbs of the Swedish capital earlier in the day, Mayers posted an open invitation to his concert on Instagram.

"Whoever's from the hood,

they get in for free," he said in a video that went viral on social media and led to lines of youngsters making their way into the capital.

High school student Farnaz Roustaei was in bed when she heard the news on snapchat and succeeded in convincing her mother to let her travel ninety minutes into town. She got her ticket via a link on Mayers' Instagram profile, and while not free, it cost her only 11 krona (1.1 US dollars.)

"I'm so stressed. It's my first concert ever," she said, sharply dressed and with fresh make-up, making her way to join her friends.

Concert promoter Live Nation said last month that Mayers scheduled the show "after tremendous support from the Swedish fans."

Mayers was arrested along with his two bodyguards and charged with assault after a 19-year-old man was hurt in the June 30 fight. He pleaded self-defense, saying he tried to avoid a confrontation with two men who were following his entourage.

Mayers and his bodyguards

were all convicted but received conditional sentences, sparing them prison time unless they committed similar offenses in the future.

The issue also led to a U.S.-Swedish diplomatic spat.

U.S. President Trump intervened on behalf of the rapper while he was jailed and called Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven on July 20, offering to personally guarantee his bail, but the Swedish leader said he couldn't interfere in a legal case.

Despite Trump's intervention, Mayers was not immediately released. Trump also sent Ambassador Robert O. Brien, the U.S. special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, to Sweden to monitor the court proceedings. Trump later cheered the release of Mayers and his bodyguards.

During his return to Stockholm this week, A\$AP Rocky had wanted to entertain inmates at Kronoberg prison, the facility where he was held for weeks this summer.

But Sweden's prison board nixed the prison concert, citing logistical and security issues.

Oscar winner Colin Firth and wife split after 22 years

LONDON (AP)—Oscar-winning British actor Colin Firth has split from his Italian film producer wife Livia Giuggioli after 22 years of marriage.

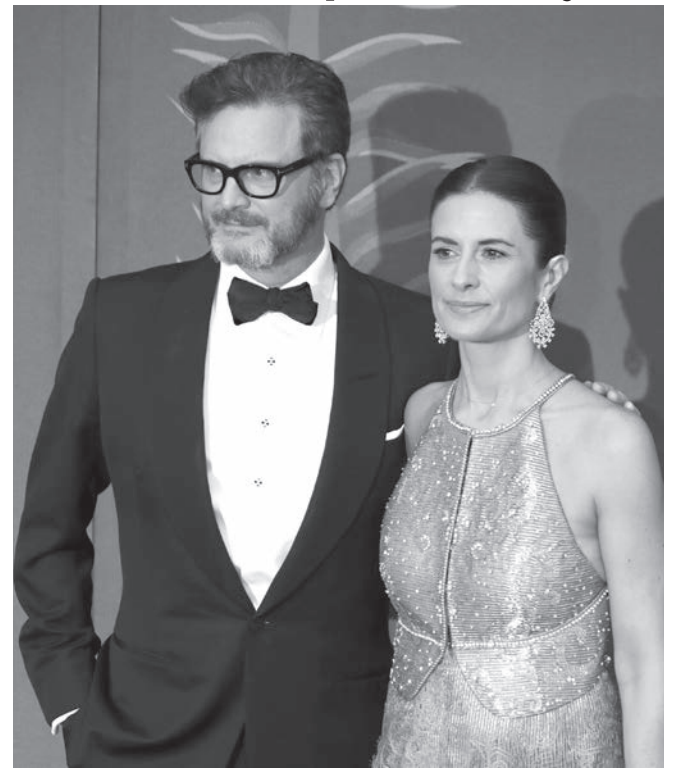
Their publicists said in a statement that the couple "maintain a close friendship and remain united in their love for their children."

The pair, who lived together in London and Rome, have two sons, Luca and Matteo, who were both born in Rome.

A joint statement from their publicists confirmed the news Friday and said they would not comment further.

Firth, who won the best actor Oscar and a Golden Globe in 2011 for his portrayal of stuttering British monarch King George VI in "The King's Speech," also has a son with former partner Meg Tilly.

Giuggioli is an environmental activist and co-founder and creative director of Eco-Age, a sustainable consultancy firm.



In this file photo dated Sunday, Sept. 22, 2019, British actor Colin Firth and his wife Livia, pose for photographers upon arrival at the Green Carpet Fashion Awards in Milan, Italy. AP

Mexican government to mediate dispute over painting of hero

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexico's culture minister will mediate a dispute over an effeminate painting of Mexican Revolution hero Emiliano Zapata, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said Wednesday.

The painting on exhibition at the Fine Arts Palace depicts Zapata nude astride a horse and wearing high heels.

The president said that the

painting did not make him uncomfortable, but he conceded that he had not seen it.

Zapata's descendants have said they feel it denigrates his memory. López Obrador said they should be heard, but artists can't be censored.

A protest in defense of the painting was scheduled for later Wednesday. On Tuesday, about 100 farmers stormed the building in protest of the

painting and later scuffled with a small counter-protest in defense of sexual diversity.

The work by Fabian Chairez is part of an exhibit about Zapata in one of Mexico City's premiere arts venues.

The artist told local media the painting is not labelled as a portrait of Zapata, who is normally represented in a more macho pose, with a rifle or pistol, and an ammunition belt.

Birthday party guest list does not include newborn

DEAR ABBY: My brother- and sister-in-law were trying to have a baby using artificial insemination. A few months into the very difficult pregnancy, they were told the baby had many life-threatening defects and asked if they wanted to terminate because the baby had little, if any, chance of surviving. They chose to carry the baby to natural birth.

A month or so before she was due, she went into labor. The baby lived for only a few hours. They had a funeral, and it was a very sad event. A month later, on the due date, they started organizing a birthday party for their 10-year-old daughter and invited 30 to 40 people, young and old. They contacted my son and daughter-in-law, who had been pregnant at the same time and had given birth to a healthy baby, and asked them not to bring their newborn. Other babies a year old or older are invited.

How should we respond? Leave the baby and my daughter-in-law at home, or refuse the invitation? Was it proper for my brother-in-law and his wife to throw a party and unwelcome a newborn?

LOST IN ETIQUETTE

DEAR LOST: Your brother-in-law and his family are in mourning. They have my deepest sympathy. If they felt it would be too painful after their loss to host a tiny baby at the birthday party, they should not be criticized. Your daughter-in-law should GRACIOUSLY refuse the invita-

tion, saying she is sorry she will be unable to attend, and send a gift for the daughter.

DEAR ABBY: What do you think of barbers or beauticians who take phone calls and continue to talk to the callers while doing a client's hair? I haven't said anything because I don't want an angry person cutting my hair. It's almost like having a doctor talk on the phone while doing surgery. What do you think?

HAIR-RAISING IN ILLINOIS

DEAR HAIR-RAISING: A short conversation to book an appointment is one thing, but what you have described is just plain rude. The first time the beautician did it you should have spoken up. Because you didn't, she/he thinks you don't mind.

Hairdressing is a service business, and the client in the chair should take priority. If you are really afraid your stylist would butcher your haircut in retaliation if you complain (talk about passive aggressive!), find someone else to provide this service.

DEAR ABBY: I have been a widow for three years. Sixteen years ago, my husband and I built a modest—but nice—home and worked very hard to pay off the mortgage early. I am constantly asked if I am going to stay in my home or if I plan to sell it. I have no intention of moving at this time or in the near future,

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



if at all. Is there a good answer to give people when they keep asking this question? Do they think I am not capable of living in a house by myself? Any suggestions will be appreciated.

HAPPY AT HOME

DEAR HAPPY: When someone asks that question, rather than become defensive, say, "Why do you ask?" Then let the person explain the reason behind it. Instead of implying that you are no longer capable of living alone, the questioner may be considering making an offer to buy it from you.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

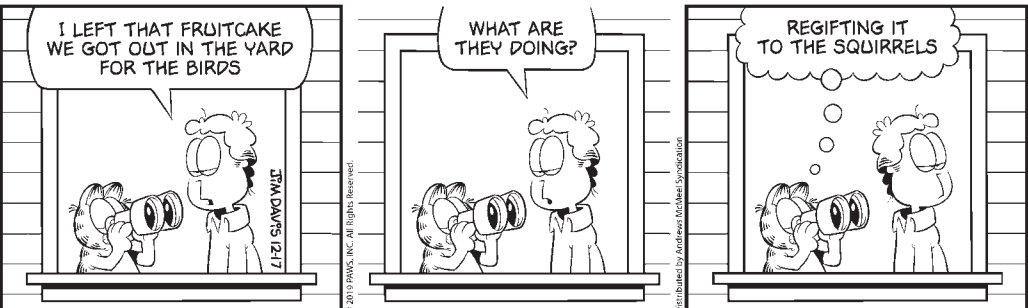


By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis

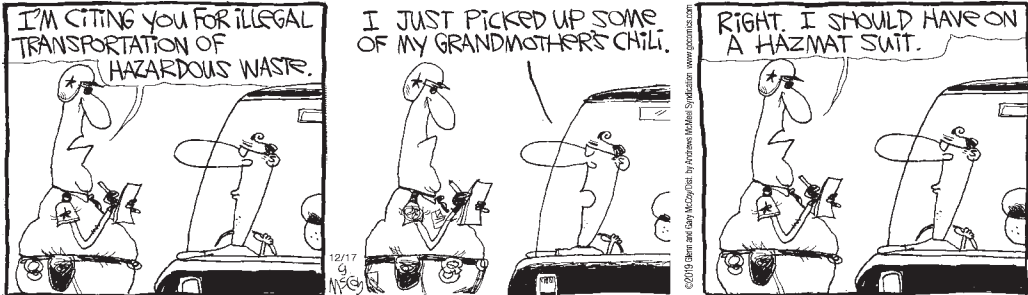
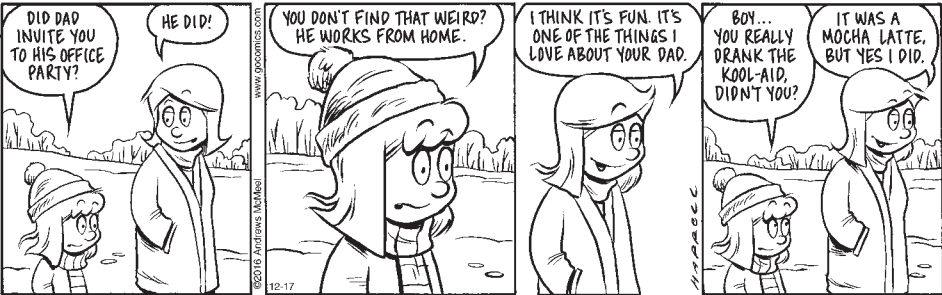


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Mentor

5 Not on

8 Social standing

12 Unsigned (Abbr.)

13 Pie — mode

14 Bard's river

15 Eric Clapton or Sting

17 Roman emperor

18 "Unh-unh"

19 Country singer Tim

21 Seafood selection

24 — gin fizz

25 Geezer

26 St.

30 Play part

31 Expiate

32 King, in Cannes

33 TV's "The — Files"

35 Caesar's "vidi"

36 Deserve

DOWN

1 Needlefish

20 Arrive

21 Cicatrix

22 Couturier

23 Campus mil. group

24 Clipped, as sheep

26 Enters angrily

27 Guesser's words

28 Furnace fuel

29 Fuzzy fruit

31 Miles away

34 Harvey of "The Piano"

35 He flew too close to the sun

37 Tolkien creature

38 "Scram!"

39 Witticism

40 — Major

41 New news

44 Lennon's lady

45 Non-Rx

46 "Home-land" org.

47 Carrier to Amster-dam

Solution time: 22 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-17

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Milla Jovovich, 44; Bill Pullman, 66; Eugene Levy, 73; Ernie Hudson, 74.

Happy Birthday: Get serious about what you want out of life. Examine what you've done as well as your current situation, and put together a plan that will help you bring about positive change. Happiness and personal satisfaction go hand in hand; if you master one, you'll master the other. Strive to reach the plateau that will help you achieve both. Your numbers are 8, 14, 19, 27, 35, 39, 44.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): When it comes to joint money matters, speak up. Giving or receiving false hope regarding how much debt and when it will be paid will lead to relationship troubles. Have a strategy in place that will help alleviate stress. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): A change will brighten your day. Try something new. Visit a site that enables you to relax or enjoy the time spent with someone you love, and it will improve your day. Put a little passion back into your life. Follow your heart. *****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Strategize before you discuss your plans. Having a vivid picture of the way you want your current situation to unfold will help you get what you want in a timely fashion. Honesty will encourage good results and put your mind at ease. **

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Pump things up a bit, put a to-do list together and get last-minute preparations out of the way before all the festivities begin. Make this a

memorable moment in time by bringing family and friends together. Romance is in the stars. ****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Refuse to let a situation causing uncertainty get you down. An optimistic attitude and talking to people who can help clarify the possibilities coming down the pipeline will put your mind at ease. Showing enthusiasm is in your best interest. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Make plans with friends, or attend an industry event that will allow you to network and mix business with pleasure. An emotional situation at home will be based on false information. Get your facts straight before you address matters. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Offer your services to a worthy cause. Helping those less fortunate, making a kind gesture or contribution, or getting together with someone you haven't seen for some time will be rewarding. A joint expenditure should be looked at carefully. ****

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Put your time, energy and effort into something you care about. A work-related change will turn out better than anticipated. Romance is in the stars, and a celebration with someone you love will bring you closer together. ****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Sort through your personal papers, look over future prospects and don't deny yourself the chance to live life your way. Put a strategy in place to make changes happen. It's up to you to create your destiny. **

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Bring about positive change, and good things will transpire. Whether it's personal adjustments at home, to the way you live, or how you handle your finances, health or contractual matters, the end result will bring you peace of mind. *****

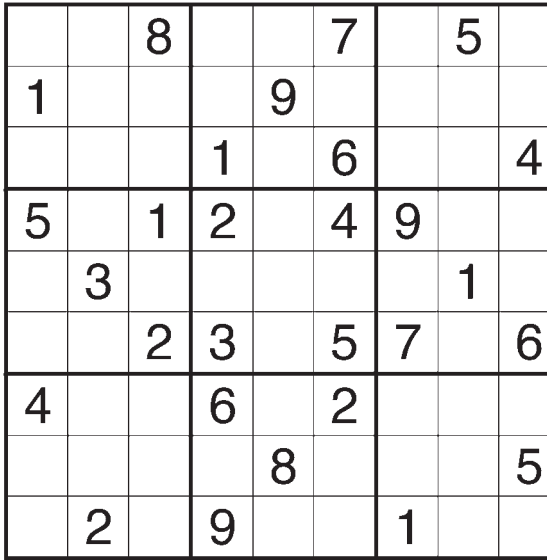
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Be thoughtful, even if someone else isn't. Concentrate on what you need to accomplish before the end-of-the-year festivities begin. Putting in extra hours now will pay off when you want to relax and enjoy loved ones. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Refuse to let what other people say bother you. Stay focused on what you want to do and how you want to contribute. Look at your options, and choose what works best for you. A financial gain looks promising. Romance is encouraged. ***
Birthday Baby: You are outgoing, practical and determined. You are inquisitive and adventuresome.

Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

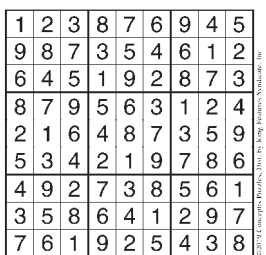
Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green



Difficulty Level ★★ 12/17

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



Difficulty Level ★ 12/16

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99c per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

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WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD**.

ANIMAL PRINTS ARE IN! Solution: 7 letters

B S E O H S N A K E S K I N T
E L Y T S P Y T H O N P E L N
J E A N S A S H E W G M O E I
R D R Z G S R L O R A E W T R
E O N R E E B L E N D K O I P
M M A D H R L Y F C W N H U
M M A T O E E A O A I O W R
U H A W Y S S L M P G L I A S
S E N X U H S S N R D S G E
L F R O I A E T I E K C A L B
A A L O R H O R G R A B C A E
D B N K T O P I D M D S C M L
N R L O B S T K I N T A O C T
A I L Y S S A S A U T U M N S
S C H E E T A H A T S W O H S

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Autumn, Belts, Black, Blazer, Blend, Blouse, Bold, Boots, Brown, Cami, Cheetah, Clothes, Coat, Dark, Fabric, Fashion, Glam, Grey, Handbags, Hats, Jeans, Labels, Leather, Margay, Maxi, Models, Name, Occasion, Print, Purse, Python, Sandals, Sash, Sassy, Season, Shades, Shoes, Shows, Silk, Skirts, Smock, Snakeskin, Spring, Store, Style, Summer, Tiger, Tops, Wear, White, Wild, Yarn, Yellow
Yesterday's Answer: Temptations
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WHATZIT Solution: For heaven's sake

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Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

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sake

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Bumgarner to D-backs on \$85M, 5-year deal



SAN FRANCISCO

(AP)—Longtime Giants ace Madison Bumgarner has reached agreement with the Arizona Diamondbacks on an \$85 million, five-year contract that ends his run of success in San Francisco, a person with direct knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press on Sunday.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the 2014 World Series MVP still needed to pass a physical to complete the contract.

Bumgarner pitched 11 seasons for the Giants but knew his time likely had ended. He bid farewell along with retiring manager Bruce Bochy on the season's final day.

The Giants said during the winter meetings this past week in San Diego they had remained in contact with representatives for the 30-year-old Bumgarner, who helped them win World Series titles in 2010, '12 and '14.

The seven-time defending NL West champion Dodgers also were among the clubs interested in signing the free agent.

Bumgarner went 9-9 with a career-high 3.90 ERA in 34 starts last season. The lefty has been especially valuable in postseason play -- he is 4-0 with a memorable Game 7 save and an 0.25 ERA in World Series play, and has pitched two shutouts in NL wild-card games.

Kluber joins Rangers

Corey Kluber led by example and excellence in Cleveland. The Texas Rangers are hoping he can do the same for them.

The Indians traded the two-time Cy Young Award winner—and their unquestioned ace—over the past six seasons to the Rangers on Sunday, a blockbuster deal that could dramatically change both teams.

In exchange for the 33-year-old Kluber, Cleveland received outfielder Delino DeShields and pitching prospect Emmanuel Clase, a hard-throwing 21-year-old with huge potential.

The stoic and steady Kluber has



been one of baseball's most dominant pitchers since 2014, when he went 18-9 and won his first Cy Young. He got his second in 2017, going 18-4 and leading the AL with a 2.25 ERA.

But his future with the money-conscious Indians grew more uncertain last season when the club managed to stay in the playoff chase until late September despite not having him after May 1.

Kluber broke his right forearm when he was struck by a line drive during a start at Miami and never made it back. He came close to returning to the Indians' rotation but suffered an oblique injury during a minor league rehab appearance that ended his comeback.

The Indians picked up his \$17.5 million contract option for 2020 immediately after last season. His deal

includes a club option for \$18 million for 2021.

A three-time All-Star, Kluber went 98-58 with a 3.16 ERA over his nine seasons with the Indians. But beyond his impressive stats, Kluber showed Cleveland's young pitchers what it took to be a professional with his diligent training regimen and meticulous preparation for every start.

Before getting hurt last season,

San Francisco Giants pitcher Madison Bumgarner works against the Colorado Rockies during the first inning of a baseball game Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2019, in San Francisco.

Kluber was struggling and there was growing concern a high number of innings and fastballs were beginning to have a cumulative effect on him. He pitched at least 203 innings in each of the previous five seasons while recording more than 200 strikeouts in each of those seasons as well.

The Indians believe the time is right to move Kluber. Cleveland has several young solid pitchers, including Shane Bieber and Mike Clevinger, on its staff and have other big needs.

The blockbuster deal involving Kluber may not be the only one executed by the Indians this winter. The club could part ways with All-Star shortstop Francisco Lindor, who has turned down multiyear contract offers from the Indians in the past.

Lindor is under Cleveland's control through 2021 season, but because the Indians won't be able to compete for him on the free-agent market, they may be forced to trade him to ensure they get something if he leaves.

Kluber's exit will be a tough sell for Indians fans, who have seen the club trade CC Sabathia and Cliff Lee—also Cy Young winners—in the past.

The 27-year-old DeShields should give Cleveland another outfield option and some speed. He hit .249 with 24 stolen bases for Texas last season.

Clase, too, has promise. He skipped the Triple-A level last season and made his big league debut with the Rangers in August, going 2/3 with a 2.31 ERA in mostly a relief role.

Texas went into this offseason wanting to bolster its rotation around returning All-Star left-hander Mike Minor and right-hander Lance Lynn, who combined for 30 wins last season while both throwing 208 1/3 innings. The Rangers have now added three new starters this month.

MELBOURNE, Australia

(AP)—The emotions poured out of Tiger Woods, just like they did at Augusta National in the spring, except this felt different.

The Masters was for him.

This was for 11 players—at times his teammates, always under his captaincy—who delivered another American victory in the Presidents Cup and a moment that nearly brought Woods to tears. And when the decisive point was on the board Sunday at Royal Melbourne, Woods celebrated with everyone he could find by hugging them hard enough to take the breath out of them.

"Any time you have moments where you're able to do something that is bigger than us as an individual, it's so much more meaningful and so much more special," he said.

The Americans felt the same way.

Tiger caps comeback year by leading emotional team win

Trailing for the first time in 16 years, they followed his lead. Woods, the first playing captain in 25 years, went out in the first of 12 singles matches and outlasted Abraham Ancer to set the Presidents Cup record by winning his 27th match.

It also set the tone for his team. Patrick Reed, winless in three matches and heckled so badly for his rules violation last week in the Bahamas that his caddie shoved a spectator and was kept from working the final day, was 6 up through seven holes. Dustin Johnson, playing for the first time since the Tour Championship because of knee surgery, was 4 up through seven holes.

Perhaps most inspiring was Tony Finau in the second match. He was 4 down to Hideki Matsuyama through 10 holes when Finau won the

next four and earned a half-point that put even more pressure on the International team.

Matt Kuchar delivered the winning point without even winning his match. His 5-foot birdie putt on the 17th hole assured the Americans the half-point they needed to win for the eighth straight time.

The last two matches ended in halves for a 16-14 score. The Americans tied a Presidents Cup record with an 8-4 margin in singles, the largest since the first event in 1994.

"It was really cool being part of this team and having Tiger as captain," Kuchar said. "We had a roomful of some of the greatest golfers in the world, and when he speaks, we listen. I think all of us will look back and have these pic-

tures hanging on our walls and say, 'We played for and alongside Tiger Woods, the greatest player ever.' It was awesome."

It was crushing for the Internationals, hoping to end two decades without a victory.

Ernie Els, who has finished second to Woods more times than anyone in golf, assembled the youngest International team ever and inspired them with equal doses of purpose and analytics. It had the lead going into Sunday for the first time since 2003, the tie in South Africa.

It just didn't have enough to cross the line.

"I followed a plan, and it didn't quite work out, but we came damn close," Els said. "If you compare our team on paper with other teams in other sport, you would have laughed

us out of the building. But we gave it a hell of a go and we came mightily close to winning and upsetting one of the greatest golf teams of all time."

That team included the greatest player of his generation. Woods was appointed captain in March 2018 and suggested he might be a playing captain, which he later said was a joke.

And then he won the Masters, his 15th major and first in 11 years, to cap off a comeback from injury made even more meaningful by the hugs he shared with family and those who never left his side.

Two weeks before he filled out his team with four captain's picks, Woods won in Japan for his 82nd career victory, leaving him no choice but to be the first captain to pick himself.

He was the only player to go undefeated at Royal Melbourne, winning twice with Justin Thomas and on his own ball against Ancer, one of seven rookies for the Internationals.

"We were very inspired to play for Tiger—with Tiger—and it's so satisfying to win this cup because of that," Finau said.

Emotions were raw on the golf course as the Americans celebrated their first comeback since the four-point deficit at Brookline in the 1999 Ryder Cup.

In his TV interview, Woods was fighting back tears, yet another indication to his players how much it meant.

"I love seeing other people cry, especially Tiger Woods," said Steve Stricker, one of three vice captains who allowed Woods to hold dual roles at Royal Melbourne. And then Stricker had to hold back tears of his own.



Falcons rally in final seconds, stun 49ers



SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP)—Matt Ryan outshined his former offensive coordinator in an MVP-type fashion Kyle Shanahan knows oh so well.

Yet even this rally might have been more improbable than either could have imagined—two Falcons touchdowns in the final 5 seconds. A pair of replay reversals in the last 8 ticks of the clock, including Austin Hooper's apparent TD reception being ruled no good.

Ryan connected with Julio Jones on a 5-yard pass that did get ruled a touchdown after a replay reversal went Atlanta's way with 2 seconds left, sending the Falcons past the play-off-bound San Francisco 49ers 29-22 on Sunday.

"That was awesome. At the end, game on the line, those are the moments as a coach that you totally live for," Atlanta's Dan Quinn said. "It makes you feel most alive."

This Falcons upset forces the 49ers to win out if they want to hold onto the NFC's No. 1 seed.

Jones initially was called short of the goal line with the Falcons trailing 22-17. But a replay showed the ball breaking the plane as the Atlanta receiver leaped in the air while being tackled by Jimmie Ward.

"When you're down that tight in the red zone, there are going to be tight window throws. It was a great effort," Ryan said. "The call didn't go our way. At that point, you have to have the mindset of just getting right back to it and finding a way to get the job done the following play."

When things couldn't get crazier, they did: On the final kickoff, Atlanta scored another touchdown when Olamide Zaccheaus came up with the ball as the 49ers were tossing it around in desperation.

The 49ers still clinched their first playoff berth since a 2013 run to the NFC championship game with the Rams' loss at Dallas.

Texans 24, Titans 21

In Nashville, the Houston Texans grabbed control of the AFC South by beating the Tennessee Titans 24-21 Sunday.

The defending division champs are looking for Houston's fourth AFC South title in six years under coach Bill O'Brien. The Titans haven't won this division since 2008, and Mike Vrabel is Tennessee's third coach since then.

Ka'imi Fairbairn kicked a 29-yard field goal with 3:26 left for the winning points.

The Texans (9-5) nearly blew a 14-0 halftime lead. De-



Atlanta Falcons running back Devonta Freeman, center, runs against the San Francisco 49ers during the first half of an NFL football game in Santa Clara, Calif., Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019.

with the No. 1 overall picks by their respective teams in back-to-back years.

Murray completed 19 of 25 passes and also ran for 58 yards.

Jaguars 20, Raiders 16

In Oakland, Gardner Minshew threw two TD passes to Chris Conley in the final 5:15 of the game and the Jaguars spoiled the final scheduled game at the Oakland Coliseum.

The Raiders (6-8) broke out to a 16-3 lead and appeared comfortably ahead before falling apart in the closing minutes to put a damper on an already somber day in Oakland.

The Jaguars (5-9) drove 79 yards to draw within 16-13 on Minshew's 6-yard TD pass to Conley.

The Raiders tried to run out the clock and got a pair of first-down runs from Josh Jacobs and another from Derek Carr. But Carr was ruled out of bounds with 2:05 to play after sliding down, sparing the Jaguars from using a timeout.

Giants 36, Dolphins 20

In East Rutherford, two-time Super Bowl MVP Eli Manning threw two touchdowns in what might have been his final home start for the Giants and New York snapped a franchise record-tying nine-game losing streak.

Saquon Barkley ran for 112 yards and scored two walk-in touchdowns and New York's much-maligned defense added a safety as the Giants (3-11) handed the Dolphins (3-11) their second loss in as many weeks at MetLife Stadium.

Manning, who lost his starting job to first-round draft pick Daniel Jones in Week 3 and got it back last week when the rookie sprained an ankle, threw a 51-yard scoring pass to Golden Tate in the second quarter.

Buccaneers 38, Lions 17

In Detroit, Jameis Winston became the first player in NFL history to throw for 450 yards in consecutive games. Winston threw three touchdowns in the first half—four overall—and a career-high 458 yards one week after throwing for 456 yards.

The Buccaneers (7-7) have won four straight and five of six, but their surge started too late for them to get in the playoffs race.

Detroit (3-10-1) has dropped seven games in a row and 10 of 11, increasing the scrutiny of embattled coach Matt Patricia.

shaun Watson threw for 243 yards and two touchdowns, but Tennessee also intercepted him twice inside the Titans 1.

Bills 17, Steelers 10

In Pittsburgh, Josh Allen threw a 14-yard touchdown pass to Tyler Kroft with 7:55 to play and Buffalo clinched a playoff spot, beating the Steelers.

The Bills secured their second playoff berth in three seasons under coach Sean McDermott. Buffalo trailed 10-7, but scored on two possessions in the fourth quarter, as Allen rallied the Bills for a comeback win for the fifth time this season. Consecutive interceptions by Jordan Poyer and Levi Wallace on Pittsburgh's last two possessions sealed the victory.

The surging Steelers had an opportunity to leapfrog the Bills for the top AFC wild card spot, but Buffalo snapped Pittsburgh's three-game win streak.

Packers 21, Bears 13

In Green Bay, Aaron Jones ran for two scores, Davante Adams caught another in the 200th edition of the NFL's oldest rivalry.

With the win, the Packers (11-3) clinched a playoff spot and swept the regular-season series between the teams for the 15th time in the last 26 seasons and the seventh time in the last 11 seasons. Green Bay defeated Chicago 10-3 in the season opener.

Green Bay now leads the all-time series 99-95-6. The

Bears (7-7) saw their three-game win streak end.

Patriots 34, Bengals 13

In Cincinnati, Tom Brady threw a pair of touchdown passes to move within one of the NFL career record, Stephon Gilmore returned one of his two interceptions 64 yards for a score, and the Patriots clinched a playoff berth.

A week that started with intrigue—a Patriots crew videotaping the Bengals' sideline in Cleveland—concluded with more New England history. The Patriots have made the playoffs 11 consecutive seasons, extending their NFL record.

Brady had touchdown passes of 23 and 7 yards that left him with 538 for his career, one shy of Peyton Manning's record.

Chiefs 23, Broncos 3

In Kansas City, Patrick Mahomes threw for 340 yards and two touchdowns, and Tyreek Hill and Travis Kelce were on the receiving end of many of his biggest throws, as the AFC West champions romped to remain in the hunt for the No. 2 playoff seed and a potential first-round bye.

Like a bunch of kids getting a snow day from school, the Chiefs enjoyed every minute of it.

Hill caught five passes for 67 yards and both scores, and Kelce hauled in 11 catches for 142 yards to become the first tight end in NFL history with four consecutive 1,000-yard

receiving seasons.

Cowboys 44, Rams 21

In Arlington, Dak Prescott threw two touchdown passes and Ezekiel Elliott ran for two scores. The Cowboys (7-7) ended their second three-game losing streak of the season, and the defending NFC East champions stayed even with Philadelphia atop the division with a showdown looming next week.

The defending NFC champion Rams (8-6), who already needed help to get into the playoffs, didn't help themselves with another poor showing a week after their most impressive game of the season in a win over Seattle. Their loss clinched playoff berths for Seattle, San Francisco and Green Bay.

Vikings 39, Chargers 10

In Carson, Dan Bailey kicked four field goals and Ifeadi Odenigbo scored Minnesota's second defensive touchdown in three games.

Los Angeles led 10-9 midway through the second quarter before Minnesota scored 30 unanswered points. The Chargers (5-9), who have dropped four of their last five, committed seven turnovers, their most since having seven against the Giants in 1986. The seven turnovers resulted in 20 Minnesota points.

Seahawks 30, Panthers 24

In Charlotte, Russell Wilson

threw for 286 yards and two touchdowns, Chris Carson ran for 133 yards and two scores.

The Seahawks (11-3) wrapped up a postseason berth for the seventh time in the last eight seasons with a Rams loss at Dallas. They also tied San Francisco for the NFC West lead.

It was the 100th regular season win for Seahawks coach Pete Carroll.

Eagles 37, Redskins 27

In Landover, Carson Wentz recovered from a late fumble by leading a 75-yard, go-ahead scoring drive and throwing his third touchdown pass of the day to keep the Eagles' NFC East hopes on track.

Wentz threw TD passes to running back Miles Sanders, tight end Zach Ertz and receiver Greg Ward and was 30 of 43 for 266 yards. The 4-yard pass from Wentz to Ward with 26 seconds left put Philadelphia up for good and electrified a stadium full of green-clad Eagles fans.

Cardinals 38, Browns 24

In Glendale, Kenyan Drake ran for four touchdowns, Kyler Murray threw for 219 yards and a score and the Cardinals snapped a six-game losing streak.

Murray got the best of a much-anticipated showdown with Cleveland quarterback Baker Mayfield. The two were teammates in college at Oklahoma and both won Heisman Trophies before being selected

Lakers beat Hawks, extend win streak to 7



ATLANTA (AP)—LeBron James finished off a whirlwind weekend with another dazzling performance.

Not looking the least bit tired, James scored 32 points and the Los Angeles Lakers extended their winning streak to seven with a 101-96 victory over the pesky Atlanta Hawks on Sunday night.

The Lakers pulled even with Milwaukee for the NBA's best record at 24-3.

"Highlights: sometimes they happen, sometimes they don't," James said. "I try to play the game with a lot of joy."

After scoring 28 points in a win at Miami on Friday night, James flew to Columbus, Ohio, to watch son Bronny play a high school game Saturday night.

Then, James traveled on to Atlanta to face the struggling Hawks.

He never considered sitting out.

"I don't know how many games I've got left in my career," the 34-year-old James said. "I don't know how many kids show up to come see me play. ... That's my obligation. My obligation is to play."

The Hawks kept it close all the way. Vince Carter passed up an open layup and dished to rookie Cam Reddish in the corner for a potential tying 3-pointer, but the shot clanked off the rim. Danny Green went to the other end and knocked down a pair of free throws to send the Hawks to their fourth straight loss.

"We did our best to compete," Atlanta coach Lloyd Pierce said. "I'm proud of our guys."

If the home team was hoping to get an off night from James, he quickly dispelled that notion.

James had the crowd—many of them decked out in his No. 23 jersey—oohing and ahing with an appropriate 23-point effort in the first half.

He threw down three thunderous slams. He knocked down a couple of mid-range jumpers. He ventured out beyond the arc to swish a couple of 3-pointers -- including a step-back shot from nearly 5 feet behind the stripe to finish off the first half, sending the Lakers to the locker room with a 55-48 lead.

He also had seven rebounds and blocked a shot, but the play that really had everyone talking was an assist—a no-look, between-the-legs pass that caught Dwight Howard breaking down the lane for a massive dunk.

Rondo also contributed to the "Showtime" performance, finishing off a four-on-one with a dazzling move that



looked as though he was about to throw up a lob to James streaking off the wing.

The lone defender, DeAndre Hunter, was left reeling as Rondo hung on to the ball for an uncontested layup. James flew in behind his teammate like he was going for the block, adding some style points to an already impressive play.

James wasn't done.

In the third quarter, he pulled up just inside the Hawks center-court logo and swished another 3-pointer from 36 feet to give the Lakers a 10-point edge.

"He was spectacular," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said. "He had some all-time clips."

Atlanta trailed by as many as 11 but kept the margin in single digits nearly the entire way.

Trae Young led the Hawks with 30 points.

Anthony Davis scored 27 points and grabbed 13 rebounds for the Lakers. James also had 13 rebounds, along with seven assists

Magic 130, Pelicans 119

In New Orleans, Jonathan

Isaac had 21 points and 10 rebounds and the Orlando Magic beat the Pelicans

"We just got to play better. We got to play better," Pelicans coach Alvin Gentry said. "We just got to keep competing, and we'll try to get it figured out."

Gentry was ejected late in the third quarter after receiving two technical fouls for complaining about officiating. It was his first ejection of the season.

Orlando center Nikola Vucevic returned from a sprained ankle to score 20 points. He played 29 minutes in his first game since Nov. 20.

"I'm really happy to finally be back," Vucevic said.

His teammates were thrilled to have the All-Star center back.

"He just knows how to play," Isaac said. "He's a great player. I think he slows the game down for us, and his ability to just bail us out with post-ups and knocking down shots is really (important for us)."

Nets 109, 76ers 89

In New York, Spencer Dinwiddie scored 24 points, Joe Harris had 16 points and

Atlanta Hawks forward Cam Reddish, left, grabs Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James (23) during the first half of an NBA game Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019, in Atlanta.

Kings 100, Warriors 79

In San Francisco, Bogdan Bogdanovich scored 25 points, Buddy Hield added 19 and Sacramento routed Golden State.

The Kings won for the fourth time in five games and shook off a disappointing home loss Friday to the lowly New York Knicks. They shot a season-best 60% from the field and beat the Warriors for just the fourth time in the past

25 games between the teams dating to the 2013-14 season.

Willie Cauley-Stein, facing his former team, led the Warriors with 14 points on 7-for-9 shooting. Golden State has lost eight of nine to fall to 5-23.

Pacers 107, Hornets 85

In Indianapolis, reserve guard Aaron Holiday scored 12 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter in Indiana's victory over Charlotte.

Holiday was a point shy of his career high set a month ago at Brooklyn. Cody Zeller, an Indiana native who typically plays well in front of family and friends, had 19 points and 12 rebounds for Charlotte.

Mavs may face East beasts minus injured star Doncic

DALLAS (AP)—The timing couldn't be much worse for the Dallas Mavericks to be without star guard Luka Doncic.

The reigning rookie of the year sprained his right ankle in the opening minutes of a 122-118 overtime loss to Miami, the first of five straight games for the Mavericks against the teams that entered Sunday with the five best records in the Eastern Conference.

Dallas coach Rick Carlisle said he didn't expect Doncic to play Monday in Milwaukee against reigning MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo, although he stressed it wasn't a medical opinion. X-rays were negative.

The rally from a 24-point deficit to a four-point lead late in the fourth quarter against the Heat was probably the most encouraging thing to happen to the resurgent Mavericks this season.

But the reality was they still lost and have games against East contenders every other day through next Sunday. Three of the remaining four are on the road.

"It's going to be opportunities, a lot of touches for a lot of people," said guard J.J. Barea, who played in just six of the first 24 games but figures to have more nights like his 12 points in 13 minutes against the Heat as long as Doncic is sidelined.

"Just got to be ready. With him here, with him not here, we've still got to start the games better."

Doncic was coming off the latest of many eye-opening games this season. A former teenage star in Spain, the Slovenian wowed the crowd in Mexico City with a pre-game speech in flawless

Spanish before scoring 41 points with 12 rebounds and 11 assists in a 122-111 win over Detroit.

Two nights later, the 20-year-old was on the ground between rows of fans behind a basket less than two minutes into the game, clutching his ankle after landing on the foot of Miami's Kendrick Nunn on a drive.

Doncic had left the arena, presumably to get an MRI, and wasn't available to comment after the game.

"Obviously, we lose a guy that's a great player," Carlisle said. "We don't know for how long. We got to circle the wagons with the guys that we have and play like we did in the second half. Pretty simple."

Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 18 of his 28 points in the second half, including several clutch 3-pointers. But he was shut out in overtime, getting just one shot and missing a 3.

Kristaps Porzingis, the other half of Dallas' star European pairing along with Doncic, had 22 points and 14 rebounds. But the 7-foot-3 Latvian missed badly on two shots late in overtime to finish 7 of 21 from the field and gave up an offensive rebound in a one-point game after Jimmy Butler missed two free throws with nine seconds left in the extra period.

The Bucks will take an 18-game winning streak into Monday's game. Dallas then plays Boston at home before trips to Philadelphia and defending NBA champion Toronto.

"Just like we did today, the second half," Hardaway said of the mindset minus Doncic. "But we have to be like that for the whole 48. It's not going to be easy."

New stadium for 2020 Tokyo Olympics completed

TOKYO (AP)—Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe spoke at Sunday's official completion of the new national stadium, the venue for the opening and closing ceremony of next year's Tokyo Olympics. It will also host track and field and some soccer.

He could have spoken for anyone who has been inside the creation of Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, whose venue is sure to be up for many design prizes.

"It blends with its surrounding and the natural environment," Abe said, noting it showcased Japan's ties to nature with its use of wood lattice work around the stadium's rim and roof, and earth-tone



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colors in the seats that are randomly colored brown, gray, two shades of green and white.

Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike pointed out the other strong feature as she spoke.

"This stadium uses a lot of trees in its structure," she said, speaking of the greenery that is everywhere—from flower planters, to trees and shrubs.

Although Tokyo is densely urban, it is also dotted with many parks and green areas. The stadium works off that theme, making sure it is functional and linked to nature.

A walkway on the fifth level is called the "Grove of the Sky." It's about 30 meters (100 feet) above street level and runs 850 meters (1/2 mile) around



AP
Photographers take pictures of the new National Stadium Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019, in Tokyo. The stadium is officially completed.

the entire circumference of the stadium. It's lined with benches, flowers and trees. A stroll offers a breathtaking view of Tokyo, and on a clear day Mt. Fuji is visible to the west.

Makoto Sato, a spokesman for the Japan Sport Council, a national government body that built the venue, said the walkway will be open to the public on days when there are no events after the Olympics.

"We have tried to emphasize all four seasons and people can use it around the year and enjoy it," he said.

'HELL'

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Vince Seaman under the guidance of the Northern Mariana Islands Cycling Federation and support of the Marianas Visitors Authority. The race has grown internationally and the opportunity for many more to come will need support

from the airline and tourism authorities," said Daly.

This year's Hell of Marianas drew 127 bikers from 11 countries and territories. Daly's compatriot Kevin Biffiger ruled the men's pro division after timing in at 2:57:02, while Guam's Laura Nadeau topped the women's field with her 3:27:55.

SAPONG

From Page 28

activities whether these involve regular competitions or events that aim to promote a healthy and active lifestyle in the region.

"I look forward to write the next chapter of our sport through our collaborations and

consultations with local clubs, member federations, and our partners," Sapong said.

Meanwhile, NMA president Ramon Tebuteb congratulated Sapong for his historic election and said the association is eager to continue working together with OAA under the leadership of its new head.

"We are very proud of Robin Sapong and recognized all his efforts in the promotion and development of the sport in the CNMI and Oceania. We are also thankful to our Oceania family for their vote of confidence to Robin," Tebuteb said.

"We've been working with OAA for more than two de-

acades and our athletics program is one of the longest-running ones in the CNMI and we will continue our mission, which is to develop and train more athletes and coaches. We will also remain committed to our local partners, both the public and private sectors, to keep our program running," the NMA head said.

HOPWOOD

From Page 28

The decider was another seesaw battle with Hopwood 1 coming back from a 13-14 deficit and winning the last three points to steal the first finals ticket. Hopwood 3 was a point away from reaching the title game first, 14-13, but its serve went wide, allowing Hopwood 1 to knot the count and extend the match. Aniana then scored an ace to give Hopwood 1 the lead, 15-14, and the team went on to notch the close win after Hopwood 3's second hit from the backline was wide.

With the sorry defeat, Hopwood 3 dropped to the loser's bracket and waited for the winner of the Grace Christian Academy 1-Dandan Middle School 1 make-or-break game. Hopwood 1 also took a breather, a longer one, as two more matches were played before the finale took place.

The GCA Lady Eagles went on to eliminate Dandan 1, 25-14, to earn the right to face Hopwood 3 for the second and last finals seat. GCA raced to a 12-2 lead against Dandan and never looked back to stay in contention for the championship game.

However, Hopwood 3 ended GCA's finals hopes after recording a 25-16 triumph. Both the Hopwood 3-GCA and Dandan 1-GCA matches were race to 25, instead of a best-of-three set game due to time constraints.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Hopwood Middle School 1 players and coaches flash the No. 1 sign after ruling the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic Girls Volleyball League last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium. Hopwood 1 swept Hopwood 3 in the finale, 21-13, 21-17.

With their season on the line, GCA and Hopwood 3 engaged in a neck-and-neck battle in the opening part of the rubber, 10-8, before the latter gained cushion, capitalizing on former's errors to take a 20-12 lead. Hopwood 3 failed to close out the match in the ensuing play when it was called for a net violation. However, Hopwood 3 won't be denied in its bid for a rematch with Hopwood 1, as it finally finished off GCA, 21-13, with a drop shot at the backline.

After eliminating GCA, Hopwood 3 quickly faced Hopwood 1, which needed to win only two sets (race to 21 in each set) with its unbeaten run in the playoffs to bag the division crown. A split in the first two sets would have brought the finale to a decider (race to 25) third. However, Hopwood 1 reasserted its might over Hopwood 3 to sweep the title showdown.

Hopwood 1 and 3 was breathing down on each other's neck in the early goings of the opening set, which was

tied last at 6-all. Aniana then scored on a couple of aces and the team also got several points off Hopwood 3's wide returns for a 20-12 advantage. A serving error (stepping on the line) from Hopwood 1 kept Hopwood 3 in the game, but not for long, as in the next play the latter failed to swing the ball back to the former on the second hit.

With Hopwood 1 needing only one set to take the title, it remained aggressive in the second set. However, Hopwood 3 won't go down with-



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A Hopwood Middle School 3 player loses her balance, as she goes for a return to Hopwood 1 during the first set of their title duel.

out a fight and gave Hopwood 3 an even tougher time in the second set. No team led by more than 4 points in second set and Hopwood 1 was the last squad to record that advantage when Aniana ended a long rally with a spike to inch her squad closer to the championship, 20-16. Hopwood 1 served for the match point and the title, but was slapped with another serving error, giving Hopwood 3 a break. Hopwood 3 then took its turn at the service area and after a brief exchange, the team dropped

the ball on the second hit, as its player was not squared off for a return near the net, allowing Hopwood 1 to wrap up the competition.

Ulloa, after ruling the middle school division, credited Hopwood 1's regular practice sessions after school hours and familiarity with each other's game to their triumph this season.

"They know how to work together and have lots of practice so by the time it's our turn to play in actual games, they know what to do," Ulloa said.



**Bumgarner
to D-backs
on \$85M,
5-year deal**

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Hawks,
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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Sapong elected Oceania Athletics Association president

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Northern Marianas Athletics official Robin Sapong is the new president of the Oceania Athletics Association.

Sapong, who is NMA's secretary general, is elected as area president of the region following a Special Congress attended by OAA-member federations yesterday at the OAA headquarters in Gold Coast, Australia. Sapong replaced Norfolk Islands' Geoff Garder, who served as OAA head for 13 years.

"I am humbled with this election. I thanked my Oceania and NMA family for the support and my family for standing beside me

on this journey," said Sapong, who's been a member of the powerful OAA Council since 2007 and is the first official from the CNMI to have been elected OAA president.

With his election as area president, Sapong will also have a seat at the World Athletics Council, bringing OAA's representative to the group to three. Gardner, the World Athletics Council vice president, and New Zealand's Dame Valeria Adams, who serves as deputy chair of the Athletes Commission, are the two other OAA officials on the group. Sapong will oversee OAA's affairs until 2023 and vows to work with the region's local fed-



erations, its partners/supporters, and other stakeholders in strengthening the sport's program.

The new OAA president added that athletes and coaches will remain their priorities and they will continue to engage in athletics

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Northern Marianas Athletics general secretary Robin Sapong, right, poses with Japan Association of Athletics Federation's Yukio Seki after they received the International Association of Athletics Federations Veteran Pin during the 52nd IAAF Congress at Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha in September this year.



Hopwood 1 takes v-ball crown

Triumphant return to 'Hell'



By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Hell of Marianas pioneer Kieran Daly returned to Saipan early this month and finished the 100-kilometer race on top of his division.

Daly rounded out the course in 3:48:49 to rule the men's 55 to 59 age group, crossing the finish line at the former Mariana Resort & Spa nearly 10 minutes ahead of CNMI resident Cesar Fortaleza (3:58:29). Norlo Jacosalem, also a Commonwealth resident, completed the Top 3 after checking in at 4:03:38.

Daly, who left Saipan in

HELL OF MARIANAS PHOTO
Kieran Daly heads to the finish line of the 2019 Hell of Marianas Century Cycle Race en route to topping his division.

2011 to move back to Australia, placed No. 22 overall out of the more than 60 individual finishers and would have gotten a better ranking if not for cramping in the last stage of the grueling race held last Dec. 7.

"I had a reasonable race, but ended up cramping at the 85K mark and lost about 6 places to finish about 22nd I think. The new start area definitely makes the race tougher as you now have to climb out of Kingfisher at the very end. This climb at the 90K adds to the pain and suffering of the race day," said the former Pacific Islands Club Saipan general manager.

When Daly started the Hell of Marianas in 2007, the century race had its start/finish line at PIC Saipan in San Antonio with the climbs on the northern end of the island coming at the 50K mark of the course. After leaving Saipan in 2011, Daly returned to the island two years later and raced in the original course before trying out the revised route this year.

"It was amazing to be back on Saipan and catch up with old friends. I really appreciate the efforts of Ricky Castro and

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By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Hopwood Middle School 1 prevailed in a family affair after sweeping Hopwood 3, 21-13, 21-17, in the finals of the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic Girls Volleyball League last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Hopwood 1, which was seeded No. 4 in the 14-team field, was undefeated in the double-elimination playoffs and topped Hopwood 3 twice to clinch the middle school division championship. Mary Joy Aniana, Tinalyn Litulumar, Daejah Benavente, Gabriella Venezuela, Mikayla Arriola, Destiny Pangelinan, Ikeesha Aquininoc, Sheenah Gatdula, Martha Langu, and Regina Pangelinan played for Hopwood 1, which was coached by Esco Anne Ulloa and Ote Kesol.

Hopwood 3 and 1 first met in the semifinals of the winners bracket with the latter bouncing back from an opening set loss to steal the victory and take the first finals berth



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Two Hopwood Middle School 1 players bend down to keep the ball alive during their finals match against Hopwood 3 in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic Girls Volleyball League last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

at stake in the duel. Hopwood 3 eked out a 25-22 win in the first set (should be race to 21 only, but there was miscommunication between the officials

and scorers). The league then implemented the race to 21 rule in the second set, but Hopwood needed an extra point to take the victory, 22-20, and force a

deciding third set, as the opposing teams went back-and-forth in that period.

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